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HISTORY OF  
THE JEWS

COMMISSION ON JEWISH  
EDUCATION

of the  
UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS  
and the  
CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS

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UNION GRADED SERIES

DEPARTMENT OF SYNAGOG AND SCHOOL EXTENSION

# HISTORY OF THE JEWS

AFTER THE FALL OF THE  
JEWISH STATE

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E52

BY ISMAR ELBOGEN, PH. D.

*Professor of Jewish History and Literature,  
Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des  
Judentums, Berlin, Germany*

CINCINNATI

DEPARTMENT OF SYNAGOG AND SCHOOL EXTENSION  
OF THE UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS

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## FOR E W O R D

3-26-59  
Lata Monica Brublie  
A number of years ago Dr. Ismar Elbogen, of Berlin, Germany, published an excellent little book entitled, "Geschichte der Juden seit dem Untergang des jüdischen Staates" (History of the Jews since the destruction of the Jewish state). Dr. Elbogen, who is at present a professor in the "Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums," the liberal Jewish theological seminary at Berlin, is one of the leading Jewish scholars of the day. His book on the history of the Jewish liturgy is authoritative. He is an extensive writer and has published many learned essays in Jewish periodicals. While the present book is a translation of the German original it is in a number of respects a new production. Dr. Elbogen has not only thoroughly revised the German text, but he has enlarged it by adding new portions. The latter part of the volume is of this character.

The Commission on Jewish Education feels that there is a great need for a good one-volume history of the Jews that tells the marvelous story of Jewish experience in the world during the past nineteen hundred years, in condensed, yet interesting style. Dr. Elbogen's book will be found to meet this requirement. The book

is adapted particularly for advanced adolescents, for adult study groups, for study circles in congregational centers, sisterhoods and brotherhoods and the like.

Acknowledgment is made herewith to Rabbi Abraham Shinedling, the translator, and to Miss Elsa Weihl, his collaborator.

Cincinnati, Ohio.

September, 1926.

## CONTENTS

Foreword.....	v
List of Illustrations.....	ix
 PERIOD 1. THE JEWS IN ANCIENT TIMES (70 C. E. - 600 C. E.)	
 CHAPTER I — IN PALESTINE.....	
1. The Fall of the State.....	3
2. The Break with Christianity.....	5
3. The Diaspora and Propaganda.....	7
4. Revolts Against the Romans.....	9
5. Exceptional Laws by Christian Emperors.....	14
 CHAPTER II — IN BABYLONIA.....	
1. Early History.....	20
2. Establishment of Academies.....	22
3. Persian Reaction.....	24
 CHAPTER III — THE TALMUD.....	
1. Its Basis.....	27
2. Tannaim, Mishnah.....	31
3. Amoraim, The Talmud.....	37
4. Characteristics of the Talmud.....	40
 PERIOD 2. THE JEWS IN THE MIDDLE AGES (600-1500).....	
	45
 CHAPTER IV — THE JEWS IN MOHAMMEDAN COUNTRIES.....	
1. Arabic Rule.....	47
2. New Jewish Magistracies.....	49
3. Religious Movements.....	50
4. Intellectual Activity.....	52
5. Golden Age in Spain.....	55
 CHAPTER V — THE JEWS IN CHRISTIAN COUNTRIES.....	
1. Church Legislation.....	62
2. State Legislation.....	67
(a) Before the Time of Charlemagne.....	67
(b) After the Time of Charlemagne.....	70

<b>CHAPTER VI — THE JEWS IN CHRISTIAN COUNTRIES (Cont'd)</b>	<b>90</b>
1. Economic Situation of the Jews.....	90
2. Social Position, Persecutions.....	102
3. Intellectual Activity.....	110
<b>PERIOD 3. THE JEWS AFTER THE DISCOVERY OF AMERICA (1500-1750).....</b>	<b>119</b>
<b>CHAPTER VII — NEW DWELLING PLACES.....</b>	<b>121</b>
1. General Remarks.....	121
2. The Portuguese Jews.....	123
3. The German Jews.....	132
<b>CHAPTER VIII — CONDITIONS OF SETTLEMENT.....</b>	<b>140</b>
1. Social Situation.....	140
2. Intellectual and Religious Activities.....	147
<b>PERIOD 4. THE JEWS IN MODERN TIMES (SINCE 1750).....</b>	<b>161</b>
<b>CHAPTER IX — EMANCIPATION.....</b>	<b>163</b>
1. The Beginnings of Emancipation.....	163
2. The Struggle for Equal Rights.....	169
<b>CHAPTER X — CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS STRUGGLES.....</b>	<b>190</b>
1. Secular Culture.....	190
2. The Reform Movement.....	195
3. Anti-Semitism.....	210
4. Zionism.....	218
<b>General Bibliography.....</b>	<b>227</b>
<b>Index.....</b>	<b>231</b>

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	<i>Facing Page</i>
Arch of Titus.....	6
Midrash Rabbah, <i>First Page of the First Edition</i> .....	22
Mishnah, <i>Page of the First Edition</i> .....	23
Talmud, <i>First Page of the Treatise Pesachim</i> .....	38
Papal Bull, <i>Demanding the Burning of the Talmud</i> .....	54
The New Church at Ratisbon, <i>On the Site of the Old Synagog</i> .....	118
The Zohar, <i>Title Page of the First Edition</i> .....	119
Manasseh ben Israel—Rembrandt.....	127
George Washington's Letter to Hebrew Congregation in Newport, <i>First Page</i> .....	134
George Washington's Letter to Hebrew Congregation in Newport, <i>Conclusion</i> .....	135
Shulhan 'Aruk, <i>Title Page to Code IV, First Edition</i> .....	150
Assembly of Jewish Notables at Paris.....	166
Commemorative Medals: <i>Napoleon and the Sanhedrin; Edict of Toleration by Emperor Joseph II</i> .....	167
Commemorative Medals: <i>Moses Montefiore's 100th Birthday; Moses Mendelssohn</i> .....	183
Leopold Zunz.....	198
Sir Herbert Samuel.....	222



Period I  
THE JEWS  
IN  
ANCIENT TIMES



# HISTORY OF THE JEWS

## CHAPTER I

### IN PALESTINE

#### I. THE FALL OF THE STATE

On the ninth day of the month of Ab, in the year 70, the Temple at Jerusalem was occupied by the Roman army and destroyed by fire. The upper part of the city held out for another month, but the insurrection in the surrounding districts was not completely quelled until April of the year 73, almost seven years after it had broken out. The Jewish nation had defended its freedom bravely, and had poured out its blood on the field of battle. It was not the superiority of the Roman army, nor the almost unendurable famine occasioned by the siege, but dissension in its own camp that led, in the end, to its final downfall. All men capable of bearing arms who had not perished in battle were led away into captivity, and many of them met an inglorious death as gladiators in the Circus. The surviving leaders were forced to grace Titus' triumphal procession, and even the golden vessels of the Temple which had been rescued from the fire were borne before the victor. The Arch of Titus, erected on the height of the Forum after the death of the emperor, still proclaims to the present generation the heroism and the downfall of the Jewish nation.

Fall of Jerusalem

Palestine was made to suffer the hard lot of a conquered land. "Jerusalem was so utterly destroyed that it was difficult to believe that the city had ever been inhabited." The whole of Judea became imperial domain, Emmaus was converted into a Roman military colony, and new towns were founded for the purpose of strengthening Roman authority. The government of Palestine was placed in the hands of a legate of senatorial, and later even of consular rank. The Jews were obliged to pay a tax of two drachmas (*fiscus judaicus*) to the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, a tax which proved all the more burdensome for them because it meant the support of a pagan shrine. All traces of Palestine's former glory were removed; with the destruction of the Temple the Romans abolished the Sanhedrin (the highest law-court) and the office of high-priest. With these exceptions the people were permitted to retain their autonomy.

Before the fall of Jerusalem Johanan ben Zakkai, the head of the academy, had obtained permission from

**Conditions after the Destruction** the victorious Roman general to found a school in the port of Jabneh (Jamnia) as a new center for the Jewish people, intending to entrust its management to a member of the Hillel family as soon as the youth grew to maturity. (Hillel, who was renowned for his wisdom and charity, died about the year 20.) Thus Jabneh became the center of the government and the seat of the highest court of justice, as well as the supreme religious authority, whose head bore the title of Patriarch (*Nasi*). All new regulations which were necessary for the life of the people were decided upon here. They cherished the hope that the Temple would soon be rebuilt and that former condi-

**School at Jabneh**

tions would be restored, and they wished to be prepared when this time arrived. Thus they constructed a world of fairy-tales and forgot the dreary present in dreaming of an idealistic future which they believed near at hand.

After the destruction of the Temple the sacrificial cult was intentionally given up. When some of his The New  
Spirit disciples complained of this, Johanan referred them to the word of the prophet, "I demand

love, and not sacrifice." The Jewish religion had outgrown animal sacrifice; it had created a new central idea in the "cult of the heart," in prayer, and had established innumerable places for this worship in the synagogues which were scattered over the whole earth. The privileges of the priesthood were not abolished, and many relics of the Temple cult and ritual legislation were carried over into the new environment. To Johanan's successor, the strong and energetic Gamaliel II (80-120), there fell the task of fortifying Judaism internally against hostile influences from without.

## 2. THE BREAK WITH CHRISTIANITY

Nascent Christianity had drawn further and further away from the mother faith. The doctrine of the love of God and of mankind, which, according to Christians  
and Gnostics the Gospel, Jesus of Nazareth had announced to the Pharisee, and with the latter's full approbation, as the essence and sum total of religion, was replaced by the doctrine of the redemption and the vicarious atonement of Jesus. The destruction of the Temple and the abolition of the sacrificial cult was regarded as a divine command against the continuation of the old worship. As Christianity spread and adopted

the doctrine of St. Paul it separated itself more and more from Judaism and from its Jewish basis; the figure of the savior was confined to the role of the Messiah, but kept continually approaching God. The Gnostics, who advocated a theosophy composed of Jewish and pagan elements, worked out a contrast between the transcendental God and the Deity who was active as the Creator (Demiurgus), representing the one as the embodiment of absolute severity, and the other, whom it placed almost on an equality with Jesus, as the sum total of goodness. Certain adherents of Gnosticism even preached contempt for the teachings of Moses. The Gnostic views created havoc in the ranks of the leading men among the Jews; only the elect among men, like Rabbi Akiba (50-137), managed to preserve their understanding of the pure Jewish teachings. Judaism was compelled to protect itself against this great danger, and all Gnostic studies were accordingly proscribed.

It was necessary to adopt protective measures against Judaeo-Christianity also, the more christology tended

**Measures against Judaeo-Christians** towards the deification of Jesus. Many Christians were still living and praying with Jews, and the synagogues were frequently and eagerly utilized as places for Christian propaganda. The defense consisted in the exclusion of all ceremonies cherished by Judaeo-Christians and in the introduction of a new prayer which rendered it impossible for Christians to continue to pray in Jewish houses of worship. Thus the absolute rupture between Judaism and Judaeo-Christianity became gradually more and more imminent. Judaism no longer had anything in common with pagan Christianity; the battle between the two was fought out in the diaspora.

ARCH OF TITUS, ROME.





## 3. THE DIASPORA AND PROPAGANDA

The dispersion of the Jews throughout the world had begun centuries before the downfall of their state. They had established a footing on all the lands of Conditions in the Diaspora the Mediterranean, indeed, great multitudes of them had been living in Mesopotamia since olden times. Many had made the acquaintance of foreign lands as mercenaries or prisoners of war; many had emigrated voluntarily, had adopted the occupation of merchant, and had assumed with it the trader's characteristic of wandering from place to place. All these groups formed a widespread diaspora, which far surpassed the mother country in numbers and splendor. Synagogues sprang up in all parts of the world, for the Jewish worship of God required no condition other than the presence of a Jewish community, and could therefore be easily transferred to foreign countries. The Roman law concerning societies and organizations, stringent in all other respects, granted the Jews permission to establish communities. Even after the dissolution of the Jewish state this permission remained in force. A circle of "God-fearing," "Judaizing" pagans, who affiliated more or less closely with Judaism, and who participated in its religious practices, grouped itself around the synagogues. A few Jewish customs won general recognition. For example, the Sabbath day of rest was so universally observed that the philosopher Seneca (4 B. C. E. - 65 C. E.), in discussing it, stated, "The conquered (the Jews) have imposed their law upon the conquerors (the Romans)." The poet Juvenal (about the year 120) deplores the deterioration of the good old Roman customs, citing as a typical example how people slip deeper and deeper

into Judaism, first learning about the Sabbath, and through it about the God who is worshipped without images, then observing the dietary laws and finally not even withholding themselves from circumcision.

Tendencies such as these were strengthened by an exceedingly active propaganda on behalf of Judaism.

**Attractiveness of Judaism** Conscious of the superiority of his belief and of his doctrine of morality, the Jew deemed it his duty to convert his neighbors to Judaism. In the Bible he possessed a missionary document of incomparable power and effectiveness. His purely spiritual God worship, which tolerated no images, was regarded by the cultured pagans as a wise system of philosophy, and the Biblical code of morals was regarded as a lofty, ethical doctrine. Self-discipline and continence, loyalty and benevolence, constancy and firmness, were esteemed generally as Jewish virtues. To all those Romans who regarded a return to the resoluteness and moral severity of their forefathers as the only means of self-preservation the Jews presented as an ideal their willingness to suffer death rather than deny or violate their principles.

Everywhere innumerable proselytes kept flocking to Judaism from the best and noblest circles. Through the

**Growth of Proselytism** sympathetic attitude of the Empress Poppaea Judaism secured influence at the court of Nero. The extent to which Judaism had spread is illustrated by the ferocity with which Domitian (81-96) persecuted converts to Judaism, and also by the decree of his successor Nerva (96-98) which abolished such persecutions. In addition, the famous journey which Gamaliel II and his leading associates made to Rome about the year 100 must have had some connec-

tion with the growth of proselytism. But above all the rapid spread of Christianity demonstrates the success of Jewish propaganda. The Synagog paved the way for the Christian mission.

The increasing influence of pagan Christianity became dangerous to the spread of Judaism. It contested with Judaism the prospect of becoming the <sup>Struggle with Christianity</sup> world religion, met the views and customs of the pagans to a great degree, and demanded no sacrifice of them. But it also undermined the authority of the Sacred Writ and destroyed the honor of the Jewish people, representing the Church as the "true seed of Israel," as "the chosen people;" the Jews on the other hand as abandoned by God and as the objects of all the Biblical maledictions. The Jews were forced to take up arms against such ingratitude and such falseness. The struggle endured for several hundred years, until political conditions finally decided the issue in favor of Christianity.

#### 4. REVOLTS AGAINST THE ROMANS

The Jews still resented the loss of their political independence and looked for an opportunity to recon-

<sup>Revolt against Trajan</sup> quer it by force of arms. In Palestine they were still too weak to revolt, but in certain

places of the diaspora they were numerous and strong, possessed of weapons and skilled in their use. In Egypt, the home of a systematic hatred of the Jews, and in the neighboring provinces, the Jews were no longer able to endure the enmity of the populace and of the authorities. While Emperor Trajan (98-117) was involved in an arduous war with the Parthians in the East, a campaign in which his early brilliant successes

were finally annulled by a revolt of the Babylonian Jews in his rear, the Jews of Egypt, Cyrene, Lybia and Cyprus revolted simultaneously in the year 115. At first the Roman garrisons were powerless against them and were forced to give way. The war was waged with incredible fury on both sides. Rome dispatched one of its best generals to the scene with a powerful army, and he succeeded in separating and conquering the individual bands. The insurgents suffered heavy losses in life and property. The famous Basilica at Alexandria, the pride of Jewry, was completely destroyed. In Cyprus the revolt engendered such fury that a decree was issued by the populace prohibiting Jews from landing on the island for all time to come, even in case of shipwreck. The difficult situation of the Romans lent the Jews of Palestine courage to revolt also, but Trajan's favorite, Lucius Quietus, succeeded in quelling this uprising with great cruelty and bloodshed.

Hadrian (117-138), in order to quiet the insurgents, seems to have given the Jews permission to rebuild the

**Revolt of Bar Kokba** Temple at Jerusalem. This permission, however, he subsequently retracted. Even at that time the hatred of the Jews for the Romans could be checked only by artificial means. When, however, the emperor made preparations to rebuild Jerusalem as a pagan city and to erect therein a temple to Jupiter, their excitement and passion knew no bounds. Preparations for a rebellion were made with great zeal, and a favorable moment for the outbreak of hostilities was awaited. No less a scholar than the renowned Rabbi Akiba inspired the entire diaspora with the ardent desire to wage a war for national independence. He also enhanced the rank of the leader Ben Koziba, or

Bar Kokba, by recognizing him, despite all opposition, as the Messiah, and by glorifying him as "the Son of the Star," "Bar Kokba." Many wonderful stories are told concerning his personal bravery and heroism; he must indeed have possessed brilliant gifts of leadership and military skill. Proof of his self-confidence is his saying: "Oh God, do not give assistance to the enemy; as for us we need no help." He forced the Romans to retreat in disorder, wrested the land from the power of his enemies, and even succeeded in maintaining it against Roman reinforcements which had been summoned in great haste to the scene of action. Palestine was again set up as an independent Jewish state, and coins, some of which have been preserved, were struck by the sovereign people. Certain it is that Rome in those days lived through such difficult and trying times, that Hadrian did not dare to begin his messages to the Senate with the usual formula, "I and the army are well." and that, even later on, the defeat of Bar Kokba was considered as a miraculous deliverance from desperate danger. The emperor summoned his most able general, Julius Severus, from Britain, in order to quell the revolt. The Roman fleet was pressed into service to transport troops, weapons and food. Despite these powerful auxiliaries and reinforcements Severus did not dare risk open battle, but tried to trap the groups of insurgents in their caves and hiding places and to destroy them by cutting off their supplies. After a succession of protracted and harrowing guerilla attacks he managed to attain his goal. Bar Kokba was forced to take refuge in the citadel of Bethar, which fell after a stubborn resistance of several months, and the intrepid leader met death among its ruins.

After three and a half years (132-135) the war was brought to a close. The whole of Judea resembled a wilderness. All the places which had been occupied by the insurgents were leveled to the ground. Jerusalem now actually became a pagan city, and a Temple of Jupiter was erected in it. Jews were forbidden to set foot in the city under penalty of death. Judea was now peopled almost exclusively by Roman soldiers and by the inmates of Christian monasteries, and as a result the Jews withdrew into Galilee. All men capable of bearing arms had fallen, together with the auxiliaries from the diaspora, and the unburied bodies of the hundreds of thousands of the dead poisoned the air. The number of those led into captivity was so great that the price of a slave was reduced to that of a horse.

Whereas Titus had deemed the war ended with the destruction of the army, Hadrian continued it by persecuting the adherents of the Jewish religion and by suppressing Jewish customs. The observance of the Sabbath, the maintenance of the academies and the education of future teachers of the law—all these were prohibited under penalty of death. Only a few made peace with Rome, as did "Aher" (Elisha ben Abuyah), who had separated himself from Judaism as a result of his Gnostic speculation. The others were firmly resolved to resist Hadrian's decree and to remain true to the belief of their fathers even at the risk of their lives. Many leading men of the times—legend mentions ten martyrs—died for their convictions. One of them was Rabbi Akiba, who declared that his death was the sublimest way of fulfilling the command "thou shalt love the Lord, thy God with

**Results of  
the Revolt**

**Hadrian's  
Religious  
Persecution**

all thy soul," and who by this interpretation defined and inspired the conception of martyrdom in Judaism. Martyrdom was considered as a means of confirming the covenant between the Jew and his Father in Heaven. All the leaders gradually died out and the younger generation could accomplish nothing while Hadrian's decrees remained in force.

All these decrees, even the one which prohibited the Jews from setting foot in Jerusalem, were annulled by Hadrian's successor, Antoninus Pius, about

**Temporary Improvement** the year 140. The land began to recuperate,

but it never regained its former prosperity and strength. The people could never again summon up sufficient power for a revolt like that of Bar Kokba, and yet Judea never was peaceful for any considerable length of time. Storms were continually breaking out in that tempestuous corner of the Roman empire. The wars between the Romans and the Parthians offered the Jews frequent opportunity of joining in and causing great damage to the troops of the emperor, which were not always victorious. These acts of interference on the part of the Jews were invariably followed by measures of retaliation patterned after the example of Hadrian. But the end of the second century was a peaceful and happy period, in which one of the Antonines, or the legate appointed by him over Palestine, stood in an unusually close relationship with the Jewish patriarch Judah I. "Hanasi" ("the Prince," 135-210). The patriarch utilized this period of peace for the completion of the Mishnah. The law of Caracalla, which was passed in 212, declared the Jews, as well as all the other inhabitants of the empire, to be Roman citizens.

## 5. EXCEPTIONAL LAWS OF CHRISTIAN EMPERORS

Thus, at the time of the turning point under Constantine (306-337), the Jews were recognized as citizens with full rights. It was Constantine who first tolerated Christianity, which had hitherto been persecuted, and by means of further decrees elevated it to be the state religion. The bishops won the ear of the highest officials of the empire, even of the emperor himself. The representatives of Christianity who, for two hundred years, had bitterly condemned the intolerance of the pagan state and had demanded for themselves freedom of worship, now assumed the opposite role and implacably persecuted the adherents of every religious system which differed from theirs. The Jews were proscribed as the murderers of their Lord, and were mentioned only in connection with the most insulting epithets. The church demanded the exclusive right to carry on propaganda and the authority to suppress all other forms of propaganda. Thus the state was compelled to enter a field of activity hitherto foreign to it.

With regard to their missionary work among the pagans the Jews were still invariably successful, but through their "stubborn unbelief" brought the zealous missionaries of the church to the depths of despair. The polemics of the latter were futile for the Jews maintained their superiority over the church in the interpretation of the Bible, and their simple and truthful explanations appealed even to many of those who professed Christianity. Even the Jewish ceremonial laws had their admirers among the Christians at all times, for the prohibition against the observance

Christianity  
Triumphant

Attempts to  
Convert the  
Jews

of Jewish rites had not weakened their power of attraction. Despite all these difficulties the church still continued its efforts to convert the Jews to Christianity. It realized that the approbation and consent of those who professed the Old Testament would be the greatest triumph of the New Testament. For this reason the avowal of Christianity was rendered easier, and even material advantages were granted to those Jews who became converted. Only in the rarest cases, however, did these methods redound to the honor and benefit of the church.

Legislation had to be resorted to in order to break down the stubbornness of the Jews. According to Augustine's teachings it was the task of the State to place itself at the service of the Church. It is true that Judaism continued to be recognized as a legal religion (*religio licita*), its worship protected by law, and its adherents guaranteed the rights of Roman citizens. And yet the exceptional laws passed by various emperors, which were subsequently elevated to the dignity of state laws in the Code of Emperor Theodosius II, gradually reduced the Jews to the position of citizens of secondary rank. The laws were not always strictly enforced and were even occasionally modified, yet the same tendency prevailed to make it difficult for the Jews to carry on propaganda and to debar them from any position of authority over Christians. As a result of this constant process, which was fully completed in 438, the Jews were gradually excluded from all state offices and governmental positions. They were allowed to remain only in the most difficult and responsible offices, but even in these it was with the restriction that they could exercise no authority

**Anti-Jewish  
Legislation**

over Christians. An "amelioration of their belief" through baptism, after the passage of a law to this effect, resulted in their being permitted to hold office again. "They are not to enjoy any honors in the state, their lot be that condition of lowliness in which they wish their souls to remain"—thus the famous legislator Justinian expresses the purpose of these laws. They have remained the criterion up to modern times and even today have not been eliminated in all countries.

Even though in public jurisdiction the Jews were subjected to the provisions of exceptional laws, nevertheless in private jurisdiction they were forced to observe the common law and to give up their right of trying civil cases in accordance with Jewish legal procedure. However, if both parties were Jews, and if they were willing, they were permitted to appeal to a Jewish court of arbitration. A restriction of the rights of the Jews to inherit property is evidenced in the prohibition to disinherit or discriminate against children who had gone over to Christianity even in cases where they were guilty of the gravest crimes against their parents. Justinian excluded all Jews from testifying against Christians, whereas their oath to the advantage of a Christian was regarded as perfectly valid. This was a point of mistrust which resulted subsequently in the disgraceful form of oath which Jews were forced to take.

This same religious antagonism controlled political relations. It was manifest in the governing of Palestine, and drove the Jews to despair. While the Romans were waging another unsuccessful war against the Parthians about the year 350, from the effects of which Palestine suffered severely,

**Oppressions  
in Palestine**

the Jews attempted a new revolt which, despite initial successes, was speedily and mercilessly put down. It is probable that the decrees of Hadrian were put into force again at this time. At any rate, to this period belong the closing of the academies of Palestine, the flight of innumerable teachers to Babylonia, and the hasty redaction of the "Palestinian Talmud." In addition, the Sanhedrin was not allowed to perform its duties undisturbed, but was forced to abandon one of its most important functions, that of determining the calendar according to the moon. The Patriarch Hillel II (330-365) rendered the rules regarding the fixing of the calendar accessible to all the Jews of the world.

The patriarchate itself had been overwhelmed with resplendent titles in accordance with the taste of the times, and had been incorporated into the hierarchy of officials. In addition it had been long favored by permission to collect the patriarchal taxes. But finally it shared the fate of the Sanhedrin, and was abolished in the year 425.

The short reign of Julian the "Apostate," the famous foe of Christianity and admirer of certain ideas of the

**Respite under Julian and Subsequent Reaction** Old Testament, was a rift in the clouds for the Jews. His epistle "To the Jewish Congregations" is inspired by sympathy for the fate of the Jews. He lightened their oppressive taxes and eliminated the vexatious and irksome *fiscus judaicus* which they had been forced to pay for many years. Nay more, after his successful war against the Parthians he even contemplated satisfying the old longing of the people, and had in mind the rebuilding of Jerusalem and of the Temple in accordance with their desires. But his sudden death restored "the triumph of

the Galilean." Hatred toward the Jews burst forth with renewed violence. The alleged participation of the Jews in the destruction of churches served to render it more acute and to lead the Christians to seek retaliation in attacking the synagogues. No large city of the Orient was free from brawls between the Jews and the Christians, because the Jews were neither so weak nor so few in numbers as to permit challenges of this sort to go unanswered. In many cases the opposition was so intense and the mutual animosity so great that regular battles were fought between the conflicting groups and actual expulsions took place. For example, in the year 412, Bishop Cyril of Alexandria insisted upon the expulsion of the Jews from the city which owed so much of its greatness to them. Such acts of violence always resulted in the conversion of many Jews to Christianity.

The Jewish inhabitants in Palestine kept visibly decreasing, their prosperity declined, and they could no longer muster sufficient strength to revolt.

**Persecution of Heraclius** Not until the time of Heraclius (610-641) were they able to give military aid to the Persians, who were rapidly sweeping over Palestine in their victorious course. As a result they secured their independence and managed to maintain it for fourteen years, but owing to distrust on the part of the Persians, Jerusalem was not given to them as the capital of their new empire. When Heraclius roused himself to resist the Jews were ready to make a pact with him. The emperor promised them immunity, but yielded to the will of the monks, who emphatically demanded the annihilation of the Jews and offered to do penance for this breach of faith by annual fasting. A few years later the Arabs conquered the Holy Land.

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## CHAPTER II

### IN BABYLONIA

#### I. EARLY HISTORY

Even in ancient times Babylonia occupied an important place in the history of the Jewish diaspora.

**General Conditions in Babylon** The land was a second home for the captives of Nebuchadnezzar. When the hour of freedom arrived only a few took advantage of the permission to return to Palestine. The overwhelming majority preferred to remain "by the rivers of Babylon" and soon learned "to sing the Lord's song in a foreign land." In this "land of two streams" the peculiar traits of the diaspora Jew were developed—his ability to feel at home in foreign lands and yet to remain a foreigner in his own home, his power of merging with his environment while adhering to tradition, his longing for the land of his fathers and his capacity for growing up with the land of his children, his pious conduct in accordance with his religious precepts and his self-emancipation from important Biblical laws.

In Babylonia the Jews first came into close contact with the capitalistic economic system. A certain number of them chose the career of merchant, and earned a comfortable living in the cities. The majority remained loyal to the occupation of farming, for, although farming

involved a constant struggle against burdens and taxes of all kinds, in the popular consciousness "a yoke of land"

Economic  
Status of  
the Jews

was worth more "than a great warehouse."

Craftsmanship was very highly esteemed as is shown by the popular saying, "Seven years of need, and still the worker has his bread." The Jews were scattered over all parts of Mesopotamia, and in the north, in the district around Nehardea, they formed the majority of the population. The location of the national capital, Ctesiphon, in the heart of the districts occupied by the Jews assured them great political and strategic importance.

The Jews had autonomy of government and the right of jurisdiction under the "Chief of the Exile" (Resh

Political  
Standing of  
the Jews

Galutha, Exilarch), a descendant of the royal house of David. At court the Chief of the

Exile occupied a very high position. As a landed proprietor who rented out his extensive tracts on lease he exercised authority over a large number of subjects. He was responsible to the king for the collection of taxes of land as well as for furnishing the Jewish proportion of the conscript army. He maintained a sumptuous court, with oriental pomp and numerous servants, against whose encroachments the people could not always defend themselves. Every autumn the people brought him costly presents as a sign of homage, confirming their loyalty to the hereditary royal house by means of this national celebration. They proved their loyalty to Palestine also in its struggles for freedom. The supreme court of justice had its seat in the court of the "Chief of the Exile." The decisions of this court were final, and provided for the regular administration of justice throughout the land. Punishments consisted

in fines or stripes; for some time even capital punishment was allowed. The development of legislation on the basis of Mosaic law and with consideration of the prescriptive law had not made much progress, and relations with the mother country were not close. It is true that the Babylonian Jews gave numerous gifts for the Temple at Jerusalem, and that occasionally a representative of the old stock appeared on the scene in order to complete his religious education in Palestine. In general, however, the Jews of Babylonia remained remote from the spiritual life of their home-land and did not impress upon it their own peculiar stamp, as did their coreligionists in the Hellenistic countries. They recognized the supremacy of Palestine and willingly yielded to its authority. During Hadrian's persecution daring attempts were made in Babylonia to set up an independent spiritual life and to win greater freedom for their religious institutions. At first these attempts were unsuccessful, and it was not until the two lands were brought more closely together as a result of the Roman conquests (about 180 C. E.) that the intercourse between them became active. The number of Babylonians who came to Palestine for instruction increased, and the completion of an authoritative code of law by Judah Hanasi finally made it possible for Babylonia to free itself from Palestinian guardianship.

## 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF ACADEMIES

The erection of academies is accredited to Abba Areka (180-247 C. E.). He was responsible for an epoch-making revolution in the field of higher education. He became the "Rab," the teacher of the Babylonian Jews,

בשם אל רביה אתחול

וְאַתָּה תְּבִרְכֵנִי בְּעַמְּךָ וְאַתָּה תְּמַלֵּחַ נַעֲמָנִי וְכֵן

FIRST PAGE OF THE FIRST EDITION OF THE MIDRASH RABBAH.—  
CONSTANTINOPLE, 1512.



and together with Mar Samuel, the first to impress their influence upon all Jewry. The Persian government seems to have favored these endeavors, perhaps in order to avoid a possible inclination of the Jews towards the neighboring Roman province.

**Work of Rab and Samuel** The founding of a new academy (Metibta) in Sura (later, Mata Mahseja), a town on the lower Euphrates, through the instrumentality of Rab, resulted in the reorganization of the academy already established at Nehardea, the seat of the Head of the Exile. Rab and Samuel strove to regulate the moral and religious life of the people, as well as the system of jurisdiction and legislation, and to this end they adopted measures which were as bold as they were lasting. They perceived the root of all evil in ignorance. Therefore they laid great stress upon a thorough reform of the educational system. They zealously endeavored to provide all classes of the population, adults as well as children, with a thorough religious education—and in those days religion embraced the entire field of life activity.

In order that the people might not be diverted from their occupations and that their commercial pursuits might not be hampered, Rab and Samuel organized the so-called Kallah Assemblies.

**The Kallah Assemblies** In the two months of Adar and Elul, just preceding the spring and autumn festivals, courses of instruction were given at the academies for people from the surrounding districts who, during the year, had devoted themselves to study in addition to their regular occupations, and who now received further inspiration and guidance in more advanced studies from the great authorities. In connection with these advanced professional courses, popular lectures were given for the people

at large during the final week. Thus, in this modest way, the general culture of the people was improved without disturbing their occupational life, and a nucleus of trained teachers and judges was created. Then, too, the encroachments of the Resh Galutha were counterbalanced by this new force, the power of the academies. They soon came to play such an important role in the life of the people that the Princes of the Exile were forced to recognize their influence and in the end were even forced to yield to their authority. Furthermore, the academies made Babylonian jurisdiction independent of the influence of Palestine.

A republic of scholars was thus formed from a community of farmers. Indeed zeal for learning hindered the occupational life of the people, and the government was compelled to interfere forcibly because of the decrease in the amount of taxes it received. From this time forth political and economic decay set in, and the enthusiasm for study cooled. Outbursts of fanaticism on the part of the Persians contributed their share to the decline of learning.

### 3. PERSIAN REACTION

The impulse toward higher education had been favored by the benevolent and cosmopolitan attitude of the royal house. But soon a reaction set in in Persia, the political result of which was to place the royal line of the Sassanides on the throne (226). Under them the nationalistic party gained the upper hand, and Persian culture and the Persian religion predominated. The religion of the fire-worshippers and their priests (Mobeds) exercised a

Priestly Persecutions

decided influence over the state. Almost immediately the priests developed a fierce fanaticism from which the Jews suffered severely. On certain Persian holidays they would not permit any light in the houses of the Jews and even entered them by force to remove it. Difficulties were put in the way of the Jews in religious matters; not even their cemeteries were safe from acts of violence. The rights of the Jews were restricted, and they suffered so intensely that the Roman rule seemed mild to them in comparison. But gradually the way was prepared for a more endurable state of affairs. Mar Samuel, a scholar of comprehensive learning, who was as well versed in medicine and astronomy as in Jewish law, performed a great service in smoothing out their difficulties. He advised the people to conform to the demands of the Persians in so far as they were compatible with the Jewish religion, and advanced the principle that "the law of the state is valid." For the citizen of today this doctrine imposes a self-evident obligation. But the consciousness of the people of old was such that an appeal to law courts which were foreign in nationality and religion subjected them to scruples and internal conflicts. It was Samuel who removed this weight from the soul of the Jews for all time and made it possible for them to conform to the civil jurisdiction, and refute the charge of seclusion with which they had been reproached.

This beneficial compromise, however, was not of long duration. The border province, with its large

**Academies  
at Sura and  
Pumbeditha** Jewish population, suffered greatly from the continuous wars between the Romans and the Parthians. In 259, after the academy at Nehardea was destroyed, a new school opened at Pumbeditha and existed there for approximately 800 years.

According as the influence of the priests was great or small, the condition of the Jews was favorable or unfavorable, although the Jewish leaders never ceased striving in behalf of a mutual agreement. Under Rab Ashi, in a comparatively peaceful period (366-427), the school at Sura attained its highest glory, and yet in his old age (414) Rab Ashi lived to witness religious persecutions. The more the influence of the royal house declined the more terrible these persecutions became. The autonomy of the Jews was directly attacked, the Chief of the Exile was killed, the observance of the Sabbath was prohibited, the synagogues were destroyed, and the children were handed over to the Magi to be brought up in the Persian religion. School activities were forbidden, so that the leaders were impelled to bring the work of redacting the Talmud to a definite conclusion.

The distress reached its climax in the year 501, when Mazdak inaugurated a communistic movement through

Last Years of  
Sassanide  
Rule which he spread the seeds of disintegration into the Jewish ranks. The young Chief of

the Exile, Mar Sutra II, gathered an army, and at the head of a body of Jewish troops confronted the insurgents and fought for the independence of the Jewish district. After a short reign he was crucified and his son had to emigrate to Palestine. The situation of the Jews was uncertain for nearly the whole of a century, and not until 589 could the old order be reestablished and the regular activity of the academies resumed. But here, too, the Arabs were prepared to inaugurate a new state of affairs.

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## CHAPTER III

# THE TALMUD

### I. ITS BASIS

After the Babylonian exile Jewish life was based on the Torah. Torah means "teaching," in the broadest sense of the term. In ancient times many <sup>Significance of "Torah"</sup> Torahs existed simultaneously, all of which were finally included in the one "Torah of Moses," the five books of Moses. In its broader sense Torah signified the whole Bible, including the Prophets and the Hagiographa. The latter two, of course, were also designated as the Kabbalah or traditional writings. As Moses towers above the other prophets, so the Torah towers above the Kabbalah, but both are regarded as manifestations of the one and only eternal revelation. The Jews who lived in Greek-speaking countries translated the word Torah as "Nomos," and understood by this term the entire scope of Biblical teachings. In the early days of Christianity, however, in order to create a contrast with Judaism, the word "Nomos" was translated as "law"; Judaism was branded as a religion of legalism, as opposed to Christianity, the religion of sentiment, a misunderstanding which has persisted more or less consciously to this very day.

The contents of the Torah are manifold; meta-

physics and ethics, law and morals, ritual and cult, but in addition narration, history, legends and stories. A

**Development of Midrash** thorough examination into this wealth of material provided endless incentives for the formation of a world concept, of a moral code, of a legal system and of ritual and cult legislation. The Bible is not free from uncertain and obscure passages or from repetitions which cannot always be harmonized and which sometimes are even self-contradictory. For this reason the Torah had to be interpreted and explained. As the world concept broadened, especially after the great migrations during the Hellenistic period, and as new necessities were created every day by the demands of life, civil and moral, the Torah was in need of being supplemented. The Midrash (from the root *darash*, to search, to examine, to interpret) provided the means for this process of supplementing and completing. The Midrash supplemented, explained and modified the Torah, but it was regarded as inspired by the same spirit and the same substance as the Torah. It developed alongside of the Torah and blended with it imperceptibly, until entire portions of the Bible could be read only in connection with the Midrash and through the lenses of the Midrash.<sup>1</sup> Through instruction in the academies and the interpretation of the Bible carried on in the synagogues the Midrash was disseminated among

<sup>1</sup>A well known example is found in the traditional Passover-Haggadah—a Midrash to Deuteronomy 26, 5-8: “A wandering Aramaean was my father, and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with but a few and he became there a nation, great, mighty and populous.” ‘He went down into Egypt’ driven by God’s command; ‘And sojourned there,’ that shows that Jacob our father did not go to Egypt in order to settle there but only to sojourn there (see Genesis 47, 4); ‘with but a few’ as it is said (Deut. 10, 22) with three score and ten people, etc., etc.

the people and became the common possession of all. "Oral tradition" which ranked as equal to revelation developed side by side with the Bible, "the written law." Everything that belonged to the province of cult, ritual and law was designated as Halakah (rules of conduct), and everything that belonged to the domain of religious belief and history, ethics and morality, was termed Haggadah (sayings of the Bible).

The representatives of this system of interpretation were the Soferim or Scribes, men learned in the Bible; Ezra, "a ready scribe in the law of Moses," was their leader, but the names of his successors have not been preserved. By the term "Men of the Great Assembly" (Anshe Kneseth Hagedola) is meant that body which guided the religious development of the Jewish people during the centuries between Ezra and the Maccabean rebellion and issued new decrees when necessary. They accomplished a prodigious work. The reorganization of public life after the exile is due entirely to their efforts and in the three provinces of religious worship, judiciary procedure, and academic instruction, they merited the highest praise. Their watchword was: "Be deliberate in judgment, raise up many disciples and make a fence round the Torah." All monotheistic creeds are indebted to the Great Assembly for their forms of worship.

The first sign of opposition to the Midrash manifested itself under the influence of Hellenism. In the dispute between the Pharisees and the Sadducees the "oral law" played an important role. The Sadducees denied the authority of scriptural interpretation, patterned after the Midrash, whereupon the Pharisees felt impelled to strengthen its dignity. Thus there arose schools which exerted the

greatest influence on the development of law and ritual, and which provided the theoretic basis for the continuation of instruction and learning. Hand in hand with Mikra (from the root *kara*, to read), that is, the Bible, there developed a new subject for study, the Mishnah (from the root *shanah*, to learn), which included everything that had not been written down, but had been handed down by word of mouth. The Mikra as well as the Mishnah was divided into three sections.

- a. Midrash—the interpretation of the Biblical text.
- b. Halakot—the laws which have been set up as the norm and handed down in definite form, without regard to their derivation from Sacred Scripture.
- c. Haggadot—interpretations of Scripture which are not concerned with law, as well as sayings of religious, ethical and historical import which depend on these interpretations.

The word Talmud (from the root *lamad*, to learn, to inquire) has the same meaning as Midrash. Both lay stress on the derivation of a law from the Holy Scriptures. Midrash and Talmud differ from the Haggadot and the Halakot only in form and method, not in content. If we start out with the text of the Bible and deduce a law from it, the method of deduction employed is called Talmud, but if we formulate doctrines without express reference to their Biblical origin, they are termed, if legal, Halakah, if ethical or narrative, Haggadah.<sup>2</sup> The

Mishnah,  
Talmud,  
Halakah,  
Haggadah

<sup>2</sup>One comparison may illustrate the difference:

Midrash to Exodus 21: 15. "Who smites his father or his mother shall be killed," that means a whip which leaves a wale.

Mishnah Sanhedrin XI, 1. "One who strikes his father or his mother is not guilty of death unless he causes a wale."

Halakah was gradually separated from the Midrash and formulated into abstract dogmas, which were likewise called Mishnah. But the Haggadah was allowed to increase without hindrance, and poured out its broad stream unchecked since it formed the basis of popular discourses rather than of scholarly discussions. One would wish to limit the number of legal and religious precepts, but not the speculations about God and the world, the human soul and its destiny, the tradition and poetry bound up with the history of the chosen people and its relation to mankind. Neither could the imagination be fettered; the Haggadah employed every form of poetical expression to teach and to uplift people.

## 2. TANNAIM, MISHNAH

As a result of this widespread interpretation of Scripture and of the great increase in the number of new laws, the material of the oral law grew until it became almost limitless. Because it could not be written down it required all the more careful examination, elaboration and arrangement. This was the work of the Tannaim (teachers). They were men of humble origin, who earned their living by their labor and devoted their leisure time to religious investigation and study. Only a minority of them were teachers by profession. Instruction was given gratis and was accessible to everyone. Besides, the work was one pleasing to God, therefore it attracted numerous participants in a religious community such as the Jews at that time formed. Hillel and Shammai, contemporaries of Herod, were the most noted among the founders of the Tannaitic schools. Their tempera-

Schools of Hillel and Shammai

mental unlikeness is illustrated by many anecdotes. The best known is the one about the heathen who wished to learn "the whole Torah," that is, the entire content of the Jewish religion, while standing on one foot. Sham-mai dismissed him peremptorily, but Hillel, without any lengthy consideration, imparted to him "the golden rule," "What is hateful to thyself do not to thy fellow-man; this is the whole Torah, the rest is merely commentary," a saying which at that time was a popular paraphrase of the Mosaic dictum, "Love thy neighbor as thyself." Just as his answer demonstrates Hillel's ethical disposition, it illustrates at the same time his method of penetrating to the kernel, and of collecting and systematizing the material of instruction. One of his chief merits in the development of teaching consists in the fact that it was he who first began to arrange traditional material and to systematize it. He then worked out his "seven rules of interpretation,"<sup>3</sup> that is, he demonstrated certain peculiarities in the Biblical text which were to be interpreted, and drew conclusions regarding their meaning from the form and style of certain passages as well as from the logical relation of one Biblical verse to another. In other words, he searched for scientific support for his interpretation. This method dammed the tide of a limitless interpretation of Scriptures, but at the same time, by the aid of dialectic, it forced too many and too remote things into the straitjacket of the rules of interpretation. This must have happened more and more frequently as the influences in the daily life of the

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<sup>3</sup>Some of them read: The inference from minor to major; the inference from a similarity of phrases; the meaning of a passage may be deduced from its context. Their importance consists in the application of the rules to the interpretation of Scriptures.

people burst the narrow bounds of the old Torah. Even though the scholars did not differ over its content, they differed widely over its application and the manner of putting it into practice. While only a few differences of opinion between Hillel and Shamai were registered we know of more than one hundred and fifty between their schools. For a long time it seemed impossible to adjust them, but an authoritative decision finally settled the matter.

After the fall of the Jewish state scholarly research became the very life of the people. They transferred the fervor of their national enthusiasm to the province of religious study. New problems presented themselves in a peremptory fashion. As a result of the great schism between the schools of Hillel and Shammai it became necessary to collect the old traditions. A considerable portion of them, all those which dealt with the Temple and its cult, with the former system of government and certain features of the political and social life, now had only a theoretical significance, and yet these matters too were considered because religious investigation in itself was regarded as a pious task. Just because of this separation from real life, because of a purely scholastic activity, and also because of opposition on the part of Christianity, the need arose of basing on the Holy Scriptures the entire teaching of Judaism. That meant also all the institutions and ordinances which had developed in the course of time, and the entire system of carrying out individual laws. There arose various systems of scriptural interpretation. The most prominent master in this new movement, Rabbi Akiba, was able to bring even those teachings which were apparently most remote from it into relation with

**Influence of Akiba**

the Torah, to discover, as the old tradition terms it, things that were even unknown to Moses. The impression made by this method was so irresistible that even the proselyte Aquila, who translated the Bible into Greek (about 115), was strongly influenced by it. Akiba is likewise famous for being the first scholar to undertake the systematizing of all traditions on a great scale. In the Bible we find many unrelated materials beside one another, while, on the other hand, laws on the same subject are discussed in several places and not always in the same manner. Furthermore, innumerable subjects concerning which the authorities of later times had particularly much to say are treated in the Bible very briefly. For example, in a general way the Bible forbids work on the Sabbath while the oral law specifies a great number of prohibited types of activity. As long as the oral law was Midrash and as long as it followed the order of the Biblical laws, it was impossible to get a complete view of it. Rabbi Akiba was the first to arrange the different fundamental divisions of this material according to the subject matter. He formulated the halakot in such a way that they became clear and systematic, and at the same time easy to remember. The name Mishnah was given to his collection also and the "Mishnah of Rabbi Akiba" paved the way for all subsequent investigation.

Of course, Rabbi Akiba's Mishnah was not slavishly accepted and revered. The minds of the rabbis were too active and critical to permit such a procedure. But it was made the basis of further investigation, and the teachers of the period after the Bar Kokba revolt, especially Rabbi Meir (about 150), treated and arranged the material in their schools according to its pattern. In order to unify these

Completion of  
the Mishnah

different codes, Rabbi Judah Hanasi, about the year 200, finally completed the work which is still known as the Mishnah today. The work which Rabbi Judah did was not entirely new; he was rather the compiler and editor of the material which had been handed down to him. His merit consists in the fact that, besides adding the teachings of his own time, he unified the numerous previous collections which existed side by side, and also made the deciding of disputed questions easier by means of the clear style in which his code was conceived. The drawing up of the Mishnah was a bold step. It was the first authoritative Hebrew work since the Bible.

The Mishnah contains the abstract Halakah, that is, it formulates doctrines without concerning itself with

**Contents of the Mishnah** their relation to the Bible and their Biblical basis.<sup>4</sup> The Mishnah is arranged according

to subject matter, and the material is divided into six "orders," the orders into "tractates," and the tractates into "chapters." The orders are as follows: 1. Zeraim (seeds), laws dealing with the ground and the land. The first tractate of this order, Berakot, treats the subject of prayers by way of introduction to the whole work. 2. Moed (festivals), Sabbath, festivals and fast days. 3. Nashim (women), the laws of marriage. 4. Nezakin (damages) or Jeshuot (remedies), civil and criminal law. 5. Kodashim (holy things), the Temple

<sup>4</sup>Berakot 1, 4.—In the morning [the reading of the Sh'ma] is preceded by two benedictions and followed by one; in the evening it is preceded by two and followed by two, one long and one short. Where [the Rabbis] order to say a long benediction it is not permissible to say a short one; [where they order] to say a short benediction it is not permissible to say a long one. [Where they order] to "seal" a benediction it is not permissible not to "seal;" [where they order] not to "seal," it is not permissible to "seal."

\*i. e., to conclude with the formula, "Blessed art Thou, O Lord . . .".

cult, including the dietary laws. 6. Toharot (purity), the prescriptions regarding Levitical impurity.

The Mishnah is a collection of legal decisions, but it is by no means what we would term a law code, since it lacks that absolute arrangement and exact method of expression by which law codes are characterized. It does not proceed from the general to the specific, for according to that method it would first treat broad principles and then present details in logical sequence without any omissions. The Mishnah follows its predecessors too closely and takes over too much from the older collections to pursue such a method. Besides, it presupposes oral instruction and discussion to a great extent, and does not always give specific information as to how its laws are to be carried out, because it is based upon the practices current in the life of the people. Nor can the Mishnah be considered a religious text book. It touches upon religious matters only incidentally, and from different points of view. The Mishnah contains very little Haggadah, in whose province religious doctrines belong, and only one tractate, Abot, the collection of the "Sayings of the Fathers," is exclusively devoted to this subject.

All those traditions which were not incorporated into the Mishnah received the name of "Baraita," the excluded Mishnah. People ceased studying them any longer, and as a result they disappeared. Only one of them has been preserved, the Tosefta (additions), which was collected in the third century. It is planned and divided exactly like the Mishnah, but is more copious. To the Baraita also belong the Midrashic collections which, as a whole, have been lost, for only fragments of them have come down to us.

**The Baraita**

## 3. AMORAIM, THE TALMUD

The Mishnah was the first fruit of rabbinical literature composed after the Bible. It soon became a new

The Interpretation of the Mishnah fundamental law and ushered in a new period of time. Subsequent generations

lacked the courage to depart from it. Although they did not regard the Mishnah with the same reverence as they regarded the Torah, nevertheless their thoughts and labor were dominated by it. They ceased to regard themselves as "teachers," as those who handed down, but called themselves "Amoraim," explainers, interpreters of tradition. Their work is called the Talmud. Like all other literary products, the Mishnah had to be discussed; like all other law codes it had to be supplemented. With all their deep regard for the Mishnah the Amoraim were by no means willing to accept it without question and criticism as valid and binding. If one adds to the stimulus which lay in the material, that growing out of the life of the people, with its innumerable demands, with its daily innovations, which rendered inevitable either a conforming to the old ideas and decrees or a deviation from them, one will easily understand why the development of the Talmud was necessary and inevitable.

Each generation developed its teaching, and each succeeding age devoted its intellectual labor to the elaboration of the work of its predecessors. The stream of oral teaching which had originally been very narrow now swelled until it became the "Sea of Talmud." It appeared to be entirely out of the question to hand it down orally in accordance with the method hitherto in

vogue, and a break was inevitable with the old principle that no written work could be added to the Bible.

Whereas up to the time of the completion of the Mishnah the locale of the development of tradition was

**The Palestinian Schools** Palestinian it was now reinforced by the addition of Babylonia. The Amoraic schools in Palestine had their seats in Caesarea, Sephoris, and especially in Tiberias. Their most important representative was Rabbi Johanan ben Nappaha (195-279), the founder of a school which made its influence felt for a period of about 100 years. With the general decline of Judaism in Palestine interest in religious studies subsided and, as has already been previously mentioned, they had to be discontinued entirely for a time by order of the first Christian emperors.

In Babylonia, however, political and social conditions were more favorable, and zeal for religious studies

**Babylonian Schools** was greater so that in Sura and in Pumbedita, they were continued for over a century and a half longer, even though toward the last only under the greatest difficulties. The interchange of ideas between the two lands never ceased. Babylonians went to Palestine in great numbers in order to bring home knowledge from the land "whose very atmosphere is conducive to wisdom." For this reason various teachings of Babylonian Amoraim are found in the Palestinian Talmud, and, more frequently, the views of the Palestinians are found in the Babylonian Talmud. In Palestine, its native land, the Mishnah was more easy to understand, and its interpretation remained plain and simple. In Babylonia, on the other hand, the political conditions of the people and the circumstances of their daily life were in many respects quite different,





and their harmonization with the Mishnah could be achieved only through the employment of dialectics. Foremost among the representatives of this clever school of dialecticians were the "sophistical teachers of Pumbedita," "who could draw an elephant through the eye of a needle." Dialectics and casuistry reached their climax in the "Subtleties of Abaye and Raba" (about the year 330). But not all Babylonians were satisfied with this method. Many of them were displeased with it and left their homes, and in Palestine the scholars taunted "the foolish Babylonians, who dwell in a land of darkness and who therefore disseminate teachings of darkness."

"The Talmud of the Land of Israel" or "Talmud of the Western Lands," commonly and erroneously called

**The Talmud** the "Jerusalem Talmud" (Talmud Jeru-shalmi) was completed too hastily and too prematurely. It lacked a final revision and a careful redaction of the text, so that the understanding of it is accompanied by the greatest difficulties. The "Babylonian Talmud" (Talmud Babli), on the other hand, was revised by Rab Ashi, a learned and careful editor, who, after long and effective work, collected the traditions and discussions and arranged them in a systematic form for the use of scholars. But the Amoraim still possessed the vitality to continue the traditional method of investigation, and it was not until the death of Rabina, in the fall of 499, that the Babylonian Talmud was finally completed. The Saboraim, in the sixth century, realizing that the old prohibition could no longer remain in force, took steps to put the gigantic work into writing, and added a number of glosses in order to make it more intelligible.

The Talmud is a running commentary on the Mishnah. Today it is usually called "Gemara" ("completion," although the word can likewise mean "lesson," "that which is learned"), but this expression was first introduced by the Church censors subsequent to the Basel edition of the Talmud in 1578-1581. Thirty-nine tractates of the Palestinian Talmud have come down to us, almost all of which belong to the first four orders of the Mishnah. The fifth and sixth have been entirely lost, with the exception of negligible fragments. The Babylonian Talmud numbers 36 tractates, paralleling almost all those of the second, third, fourth, and fifth orders of the Mishnah and one tractate each of the first and sixth orders. Whereas the Mishnah is written in Hebrew—not the classical Hebrew of the Bible but the so-called Neo-Hebrew which was developed later—the Talmud employs the current Aramaic dialect almost exclusively. The Mishnah contains practically no Haggadah, but Haggadah forms a considerable portion of the Talmud, and the Palestinian Talmud especially abounds in it.

#### 4. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TALMUD

The Talmud is not the work of one man, but is the product of a thousand years of intellectual endeavor and historical development on the part of the <sup>Its Contents and Style</sup> Jewish people. Its contents are as manifold and as variegated as life itself, and there is no subject under the sun, no bit of knowledge taken from the entire range of human perception and experience of its time, which it does not touch upon. Even

speculation concerning the future world occupies a prominent place in the work. The discussions of the Mishnah furnish the framework of the whole; the treatment of one subject often leading to the discussion of another, the second to a third, and so forth. In the Talmud no abstract interpretations are given, but actual men appear on the scene, defending their views with passion and vigor, and discussing the reasons for and against them in active debate. Just as in any lively interchange of opinion people's thoughts jump from one subject to another, and they bring reasons and proofs remote from the subject they are discussing, so in the Talmud there occur many sudden and unexpected transitions from one matter to another which is quite remote from it. The Talmud has often been compared with the minutes of parliamentary deliberations. It should rather have been compared with a reporter's notes on the progress of a lively trial, with its proofs and counterproofs. For the Talmud does not contain coherent discourses, but sharp, pointed remarks which are briefly given without much indication of their significance, so that, in addition to difficulties in language and in subjects treated, the style of the Talmud also offers many puzzling riddles which could never have been solved if their explanation had not been handed down throughout the centuries. Because of its brevity of expression the Talmud became a brilliant school of logical thinking for the Jews, and because of its rich content it provided them with material knowledge in abundance. The Jews never relapsed into spiritual apathy or dullness, not even during the years when they were excluded from all general instruction. Their power of thought was stimulated by means of the

Talmud and directed toward all possible branches of knowledge, such as medicine, anatomy, physiology, psychology, history, geography, mathematics, astronomy, and so forth, not to mention religion and law. And just as the Halakah sharpened their intellect, the Haggadah refreshed their hearts and fired their imagination. It elevated the spirit of the Jews into the supermundane, spiritual world, inspired them with hope in God's providence, even in their most bitter experiences, and made them eager and anxious for the future redemption of mankind.

With the exception of the Bible, the Talmud is the first and last work which was produced by the spirit of the entire Jewish people. It was therefore reverenced as a national possession, as a principle of life, and as a result of the investigation to which it was subjected and of the esteem in which it was held, it forced the Bible into the background for many centuries. It brought down upon itself the hatred of all the enemies of the Jewish people, who attacked the Talmud as the evil genius of the Jew and sought to destroy it. Points for attack were not lacking, because the kaleidoscopic contents of the comprehensive work do not consist entirely of gems of eternal value. Side by side there are found in it the most lofty religious doctrines as well as the crassest superstitions, the deepest thoughts as well as the most ridiculous popular notions, expressions of a highly developed social consciousness and of the noblest philanthropy as well as outbursts of passionate animosity, reason as well as absurdity, clarity as well as obscurity, poetry as well as triviality. The Talmud and each of its statements must be explained in accordance with the times and with the environment,

*Its Interpretation and Influence*

and then it will be understood that, although the Jews were perhaps no better, they were, at least, no worse than the rest of the world. The Jewish people possessed a sound instinct which enabled them to distinguish between the valuable and the worthless, between the eternal and the transitory. They reverenced the monumental structure of the Talmud as the continuation and interpretation of the Bible, and they were able to cull from it all the material which was impregnated with the spirit and the teachings of the Bible. Thus the Talmud became the guide of the Jews throughout the ages; it gave them a deeply religious, ethical outlook upon the world, and it trained them for a life of earnest devotion to duty, of social justice, and of strict morality.

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Period II  
THE JEWS  
IN  
THE MIDDLE AGES  
(600-1500)



## CHAPTER IV

### THE JEWS IN MOHAMMEDAN COUNTRIES

#### I. ARABIAN RULE

Judaism once more provided the incentive toward founding a new world religion. Independent Jewish tribes in Arabia disseminated their religious *Mohammed and the Jews* truths and doctrines within the limits of their own environment with no less zeal and success than the Jews of Hellenistic lands had done previously. Dhu Nowas, the ruler of a South-Arabian kingdom, became converted with his tribe to Judaism and adopted the name Joseph. Among the Arabs a great spiritual and religious change was brought about as a result of a closer feeling for the Jews, "the people of the Book." Mohammed, owing to his frequent intercourse with Jewish and Christian teachers abolished the crude worship of his people, attacked idols, preached monotheism, a stern morality, justice and charity. At first Mohammed (570-632) showed himself very favorable to the Jews, but when he perceived that they did not reciprocate his kindly feelings, his friendship turned to deadly hatred and he sought to obtain revenge by annihilating all the Jews of Arabia. Judaism had again

lost its golden opportunity of becoming the religion of the world, Mohammedanism now sought to establish itself more widely by means of the holy war commanded by the prophet.

Within a short time the caliphs had conquered all of Western Asia, Egypt, and the northern coast of Africa. Before a century had passed they were in possession of the greater part of Spain.

**The Conquests of Islam** The conquests of Islam ushered in a new era in the Orient, the achievements of which helped to inaugurate a classical period of Jewish culture. In the lands outside of Arabia the vigorous methods of Mohammed could not be put into practice, and the Jews had to be tolerated, inasmuch as they formed an important and essential part of the population. To Caliph Omar (634-644) are ascribed those regulations which the Jews in Mohammedan lands were henceforth to observe. Religious freedom was guaranteed, with the restriction that new synagogues could not be erected, and conversion to Mohammedanism was not to be prevented, while the penalty of death was attached to apostasy from Islam, abuse of the prophet, and ridicule of the Mohammedan ritual. The Jews were permitted to ride only on mules, and not on horses, and were to be distinguished from the Moslems by their clothing. As was of frequent occurrence in the Orient, these laws were not always strictly enforced, and many of them fell into disuse and were forgotten. The life of the Jews was therefore quite endurable, especially since the development of their spiritual and civil life suffered no restrictions.

## 2. NEW JEWISH MAGISTRACIES

In Mesopotamia the autonomy of the Jews was even heightened. The power and influence, the right of taxation and jurisdiction, which the Chiefs of the Exile enjoyed, were strengthened about the year 640. The academies received new privileges of taxation and jurisdiction, and their leaders bore the title of "Gaon" (Excellency) from this time forth. The task of the Gaonim, in addition to judging and governing, consisted in the direction of the educational system, in the examination and appointment of judges, and in the rendering of legal opinions. All Jewry respected their authority, made inquiries of them, and followed their instructions.

The preponderance of Babylonian Jewish customs throughout the subsequent ages and the implicit acceptance of the laws formulated in the Babylonian Talmud are the result of their work and influence. Their power was regarded as the remnant of the old national glory. Just as they had done in the case of the Patriarchs of the House of Hillel, so now the Jews of every land placed free-will offerings at their disposal for the maintenance of the academies. Prayers were offered up every Sabbath for their well-being, and even though the Chiefs of the Exile were included in these prayers, nevertheless the thoughts and reverence of the worshippers were concerned more with the religious head than with the secular magistrate. The simultaneous existence of two such authorities with practically the same powers was not very beneficial, and very often it was accompanied by altercations and disputes.

## 3. RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

A fatal conflict occurred when Anan ben David (about 750) was not chosen head of the exile, as he had Karaism a right to expect by virtue of the fact that he was the oldest person entitled to the office.

Anan regarded this affront as sufficient grounds for founding an anti-rabbinic sect. In the magic Perso-Babylonian kettle of witchcraft trouble was incessantly brewing and messiahs and founders of new religions often appeared. Within Judaism itself there were many adherents of mystic, messianic, and anti-Talmudic movements, as well as branches of the old Sadducean party. Anan formed all these malcontents into a sect which called itself the "Adherents of the Bible" (Bene Mikra, Karaites), and which designated its adversaries as the "Rabbanites." He succeeded in having the new sect recognized by the caliph by calling attention to the dispute concerning tradition which the Sunnites and Shiites were carrying on within Mohammedanism. And yet Anan could not get away from tradition entirely, and he only created a Talmud of a different kind. The new sect soon spread from Babylonia to Palestine, thence to Egypt, and even to Spain, and in later times it crossed from Constantinople into Russia and Galicia. Like every sect which opposes the prevalent religion and which strives to make itself dominant, the Karaites displayed considerable intellectual and religious activity. They devoted themselves to Biblical investigation with especial assiduity, and they made life bitter for the Rabbanites by means of their polemics and attacks against tradition. In the tenth century their investigation attained its climax; from that time forth stagnation in their spiritual

and mental life set in, and it was not until the nineteenth century that they again manifested some spiritual activity. The Karaites did not break completely with the rabbinic ritual, but only modified it. In contrast to the pliable decisions of Rabbanism which were comparatively easy to interpret the Karaites made life more severe and the forms more stringent. Their marriage laws prevented the spread of the sect, so that it shrank to a small group. It is only in the last century that the Karaites have shown any increase at all, due to the fact that the Russian government favored them for the purpose of offending the Jews.

Practically simultaneous with the schism of the Karaites was the conversion to Judaism of a large part

<sup>Conversion of the Chazars</sup> of the Chazars, a Finnish people dwelling near the mouth of the Volga. It was to protect themselves from the attacks of this tribe that the Persian kings built the "Gates of Alan," not far from Derbend, but the Chazars surmounted this obstacle and conquered the Crimea. The poet Jehuda Halevi utilized the legendary report concerning the conversion of their king, Bulan, as the frame-work for his presentation of Judaism. At its basis lies the fact that Jewish and Christian merchants who visited the land of the Chazars tried to convert the people, and that the Jews, whose numbers seemingly were greatly augmented as a result of the terrible persecution in the Byzantine empire about the year 725, finally were victorious in the contest. This conversion was far-reaching in its effects. Outwardly it resulted in a great increase in the number of converts to Judaism; inwardly it resulted in the deepening and intensifying of the Jewish doctrines. Prince Obadiah founded synagogues and

schools, and had himself and his people instructed in the Bible and Talmud. Among the many results of the new teachings were the abolition of the old, immoral practice of selling children into slavery, and the birth of a spirit of tolerance towards the adherents of other faiths. According to the fundamental law of the people, the king had to be a Jew, but the supreme court consisted of judges belonging to all strata of the population and to all religious groups. Whenever the Jews heard of an independent Jewish state, they rejoiced exceedingly, seeing in it a continuation of the Hebrew commonwealth. The kingdom of the Chazars maintained its independence until the year 965, when it was conquered by the Russians of Kiev. This conquest was probably bound up with their forcible conversion to Christianity. The question as to the number of Chazars who struggled openly or secretly to practice their Judaism and the further question whether or not a portion of them migrated northward and became in part the ancestors of the Russian Jews cannot be definitely decided.

#### 4. INTELLECTUAL ACTIVITY

The spiritual power of Judaism had exhausted itself by reason of its labors on the Talmud, but the breaking down of the old custom which tolerated no written works alongside of the Bible leveled the way for the development of Jewish literature which now gradually began. Attention was first of all turned to the Bible. The Biblical text was provided with the vowel and accent signs which had been introduced into the Hebrew a short time previously; a special science, the Masorah, concerned itself with a pre-

cise and careful textual revision on the ground of tradition. The Aramaic translations (Targumim), which had been employed in religious services and for purposes of instruction since olden times were written down, and the inexhaustible treasure-house of religious and ethical Haggadic interpretations which we now have in the Midrash were collected. In addition, the liturgy was composed, and the traditional prayers were enriched by poems to which was given the name "Piutim," a word borrowed from the Greek (poetry). All these new branches of literature were first developed in Palestine. In Babylonia attempts were made to revise the Talmud, but for many centuries Babylonia contributed no important original work. Not until Arab influence made itself felt did a great intellectual awakening occur.

The barbarous conquerors became a peaceful and cultured people. They took up once more the scientific

**Arab Influence and the Rise of Philosophy** activities of the Greeks, and endeavored to reanimate and continue their literature. The Jews played an important part in this renaissance by virtue of their mental alertness and of their easy familiarity with things Arabian. Very early in the course of this revival they translated works on mathematics and astronomy, on medicine and natural sciences, and especially on philosophy. The Jews owed much to the influence of the Arabian academies at Basra and Bagdad, so that, as early as the year 800, they appeared as independent authors, especially in the field of astronomy and natural science.

The development of a scientific point of view on the part of the Arabs was of great significance for Judaism. Judaism too was concerned with the two important problems which troubled Mohammedan<sup>2</sup> thinkers,

namely, how to harmonize the anthropomorphism of the Koran (ascribing to God human form and qualities) with the doctrine of the one and spiritual God, and how to bring the doctrine of free will into agreement with that of God's providence. In the Bible, and even more so in the Talmudic Haggadah, there are many passages in which God is pictured as a corporeal being. The Haggadah, above all, is influenced by the popular notions of the times; the devotees of pantheism (whose fundamental principle is that all is God) portrayed the form of God in characteristically bold, oriental imagery. Many sought relief from the barrenness of Talmudic Halakah in mystic's subtle reasonings and dreams of redemption. Under the influence of the philosophic rationalism of the Arabs Judaism safely passed through this stage. In the period from 900 to 1200 it developed its monotheistic conception in concise, classical form, and elevated its religious beliefs to the summit of contemporary philosophical investigation.

One of the pioneers in this field was Saadya ben Joseph of Fayyum (892-942), who was appointed Gaon **Saadya** in Sura at the early age of forty-one. A man of an indomitable aggressive energy and unswerving veracity he fought the Karaites as well as the contemporary critics of the Bible and delivered Judaism from many great perils. He is the founder of the systematic treatment of Judaism, and, in addition, the first Jewish theologian who wrote exclusively in Arabic. It was he who made the first attempts to investigate the laws of Hebrew grammar and lexicography. For the purpose of making the Holy Scriptures clear to his contemporaries he wrote a translation of and commentary on the entire Bible in Arabic. In the field of Halakah

Contra hebreos retinentes li  
bros in quibus aliquid con  
tra fidem catholicam no  
tetur vel scribatur.



Romæ apud Antonium Bladum Impressorem Cameralem.

PAPAL BULL. AN EDICT OF POPE JULIUS III, DATED  
MAY 29, 1554, DEMANDING THE BURNING OF THE TALMUD



he gained distinction through his systematic treatment of the various separate problems, and he is said to have translated the Mishnah into Arabic. Finally, in his work, "Doctrines and Views" ("Emunoth Ve-Deoth" in Hebrew), we possess the first systematic treatment of the most important doctrines and dogmas of Judaism. His works inspired many others to the most productive activity. The stimulus which he gave to investigation, criticism, and systematic research never departed from Judaism, and resulted in the ushering in of a classical period of Jewish literature in Spain.

### 5. GOLDEN AGE IN SPAIN

After a century of the most oppressive religious intolerance the Jews welcomed the Arabs as their liberators and assisted them in their wars. Important fortresses were entrusted to Jewish garrisons. In this way the Jews regained their complete freedom and, to a certain degree, even their right of jurisdiction. The "Decree of Omar" was lightly esteemed, and only a poll tax was required of the Jews. All occupations were now thrown open to them, and as many of them took up agriculture as commerce. The Jews won special merit by reason of their introduction and dissemination of the art of silk weaving, which was familiar to them from early times. Even under the Mohammedans of Spain persecutions occurred occasionally, but they were only transitory outbreaks of passion, of a purely local nature, without lasting results. Not until the year 1150, when the Almohades of Northern Africa conquered Spain, did the spirit of fanatical religious hatred reappear, and then

it claimed innumerable victims among the Jews. At that time, however, the zenith of the Moorish rule had been reached, and the power of the Mohammedans was on the decline.

In its golden age the caliphate of Cordova attained a remarkable degree of culture. The Jews participated

actively in this scientific work, and brought **Chasdai ibn Shaprut** their own intellectual life to a state of perfection which they never again were able to reach. At the court of Abdul Rahman III (912-961) Chasdai ibn Shaprut, a physician and linguist of great ability, was assigned the task of keeping in touch with the ambassadors of foreign courts. In this position he had the opportunity of receiving an embassy of the German emperor Otto the Great (936-973) and of preventing a diplomatic conflict between the two powerful princes. Chasdai, the first of a line of illustrious Jewish statesmen in Spain, was at the same time the first *Mae-cenas* to foster and to encourage Jewish studies with royal generosity. Under his beneficent protection the Hebrew poets began to flourish, the study of the Hebrew language began to bloom, and even the study of the Talmud received powerful impetus. Under Al Hakem, the founder of the famous Cordova Library, the Mishnah was translated into Arabic.

But all this was only the beginning; complete results were achieved later. In Granada, Samuel Hanagid (993-

**Poetry,  
Exegesis,  
Philosophy  
Flourish** 1055) had risen from common rank to the office of vizier. He himself was a poet and investigator, and therefore he encouraged scholars and poets. His example was followed by Jewish statesmen of the other Moorish courts, which through their princely liberality likewise became centers

of Jewish studies. Under the protection of these statesmen there developed a number of the most prominent scholars, thinkers, and poets, all of whom have left their mark upon the age. They introduced a method of Biblical interpretation which departed from the traditional method in that it examined critically into the text and elaborated it with all the means of rational perception. The study of the Talmud was elevated from the rank of detailed explanation to that of systematic presentation. The philosophy of religion was zealously studied with the aid of the classical Greek thinkers, and the Jewish conception of religion was examined into on a rational basis, and made more spiritual. While the scholars, in accordance with the culture of the country in which they were living, wrote their works in Arabic, nevertheless the muse of the Hebrew language reawakened in some miraculous manner, and brought forth Hebrew works which compare favorably with their Biblical prototypes in harmony and grandeur. In Spain there flourished a generation of true poets who composed not only religious poems, but also secular songs which occupy an important place in the literature of the world.

The classical period of Hebrew poetry was ushered in by Solomon ibn Gabirol (1020-1070), "this true, consecrated lyric poet, this pious nightingale."

**Leading Poets of the Period** His bitter lot in life nearly drove him to melancholy, but his lofty faith and his innermost resignation to the will of God exalted him above his despair. He excelled all men in his ability to pray, and to give poetic expression to the deep yearning of the human soul. He also exercised great influence as a philosophical writer. His "Fountain of Life," which was translated into Latin, became an important source-

book of scholastic philosophy, which often quotes him under the name of Avicébron, as a high authority, almost as a father of the Church. Of the two Ibn Ezras, Moses (about 1075-1138) was a master of secular poetry and, at the same time, the most important composer of Hebrew penitential poems, while Abraham (1092-1167) was the most illustrious Hebrew philologist and Biblical commentator, one who provided the incentive toward the beginnings of Biblical criticism. The palm of Hebrew poetry belongs to Jehuda ben Samuel Halevi (about 1070-1140), who gives a transfigured picture of the nation's soul in its poetic feeling, in its historical struggles, in its patriotic loyalty, and in its universal martyrdom." Herder translated his "Song of Zion" into German, for he considered that there was nothing in the entire field of religious poetry, not even excepting Milton and Klopstock, superior to this elegy, in which language has voluntarily revealed all her riches and charm to one who never wished to manifest his skill by an attempt at virtuosity, but always portrayed the deepest impulses of the soul in pious devotion and in unconscious modesty. Jehuda Halevi's conception of Judaism as presented in his work, the "Kuzari" (the Chazar), is permeated with the spirit of poetry. He bases Judaism entirely on history, assigns a special role in creation to the choosing of Israel, to the Holy Land, and to the Jewish cult, and points out that only the combination of all these factors can produce the highest form of perfection, the immediate and indubitable manifestation of God.

Moses ben Maimon (Rambam, 1135-1204) signifies the completion of the spiritual evolution of the Jews of Spain. He was born in Cordova, but in his youth he was forced to leave his home because of religious per-

secutions. After long wanderings and bitter sufferings he found a haven of refuge in Fostat, near Cairo, where he was known as an illustrious physician. There is no other character in Jewish literature who has exercised **Maimonides** such a deep and powerful influence in so many directions and over so many generations. His immortal fame consists in the fact that he brought order and system into the science of the Talmud and presented the teachings of Judaism from a lofty, spiritual point of view. His "Mishneh Torah" (likewise called "Yad ha Hazakah," "Mighty Hand") stamps him as a master of logic and system. It is a compendium of Judaism, and contains everything from the dogmas of Judaism to the remotest branches of ritual and law, as well as glimpses into the Messianic future. Nothing in the wide range of Jewish literature did the author overlook, yet he presented his comprehensive subject with remarkable clearness and lucidity. The work met with occasional contradiction, and even bitter opposition, but more often it was received in wonder and admiration, and was the incentive toward the production of many other works.

Maimon's reputation was established far beyond Jewish circles by his "Guide for the Perplexed" (in Hebrew, *Moreh Nebukim*) an excellent philosophical presentation of Jewish Theology. **The "Guide for the Perplexed"**

"There is no portion of the work in which basic doctrines which bear the stamp of originality and perfection and which deeply influence life and literature may not be found, seeds of independent investigation, sprouts of enlightenment and progress, which are memorable in the history of religious evolution as so many achievements and accomplishments of the philosophical

spirit." Just as the "Moreh" was made the basis of theological instruction in the Mohammedan academies, so, after its early translation into Latin, the leading Christian scholastics always deemed the important doctrines of Maimon as worthy of consideration. The greatest philosophers of all ages, even up to Kant and Leibnitz, drew inspiration and guidance from the work. In Judaism the book was both deeply revered and bitterly attacked, but the cultured never failed to recognize its value. All periods of Jewish enlightenment have been influenced by the "Moreh," and all Jewish thinkers of renown, from Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677) to Herman Cohen (1842-1918) received from it their first instruction in philosophy.

The climax of the mediaeval development of Judaism was reached in Maimon. From now on a reaction and a **Decline** decline set in. The weakening of the power of the Mohammedans and their growing religious intolerance and narrowness are some of the factors which made it impossible for the Jews of the Orient to accomplish anything of note in the following centuries.

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## CHAPTER V

### THE JEWS IN CHRISTIAN COUNTRIES

#### I. CHURCH LEGISLATION

**Attitude of the Church toward the Jews**

In order to protect the souls of believers from harm the Church claimed the right of disciplining heretics and infidels. They tolerated the Jews "out of Christian love" or "as living witnesses of the truth of Christianity," but insisted upon their absolute separation from the Christians and especially prohibited social intercourse and intermarriage, for "no shadow was to fall upon the sons of light through union with darkness." The Councils of the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries adopted resolutions in the spirit of the first Christian emperors. At their time they were little observed, but they were incorporated into the canonical law and thus perpetuated. Gregory the Great (590-604) adopted a policy which was the standard for all subsequent treatment of the Jews. He forbade any act of violence against them, though he would tolerate no violation of the canonical decrees. He forbade all religious persecution or forcible conversions, but recommended conversion by means of persuasion or the granting of material benefits.

Gregory's decrees served as the basis of the formula for the "Sicut Judaeis" or "letters of protection," by

means of which, beginning from the time of Calixtus II (1119-1124), the popes promised the Jews freedom of belief and security of life, property, and legal rights. The Jews sought protection from the popes against persecution and calumny. Innocent IV refuted the blood accusation in the year 1247, and the confirmation of his bull by Clement XIV (1769-1774) is the best known. On the occasion of the notorious Beilis trial at Kiev in the year 1913, the papal secretaryship again testified to the genuineness of both documents. When the "Black Death" was decimating Europe and inciting the Christians to violent outbreaks against the Jews, Clement VI affirmed their innocence and warned his coreligionists not to commit any act of violence against them.

But the popes, none the less, regarded themselves as the protectors of ecclesiastical tradition, which had assumed a position opposed to the Jews. <sup>Oppressive Restrictions</sup> Accordingly the great Councils were a continual source of terror to the Jews. The fourth Lateran Council under Innocent III (1215) issued decrees which led to the most serious encroachments upon the freedom and possessions of the Jews as well as upon the supremacy and authority of the state or secular power. It likewise humiliated the Jews by forcing them, for hundreds of years, to wear a distinctive mark upon their clothes, the "yellow badge," and thus exposed them to the taunts and jeers of the populace. From time to time local councils passed resolutions which resulted in general decrees that were disastrous in their consequences. The decree of the Synod of Breslau (1267), prohibiting the Jews from living together with the Christians in the eastern provinces where "the Church was still a tender

shoot" finally led to the establishment of the ghetto restrictions in all countries.

Canonical laws were never consistently and strictly enforced. The papal court was not always closed to complaints and protests—every door in Rome could be opened with a "golden key"—and outside of the territories of the Church the popes often had no power to compel the secular authorities to enforce the decrees of the Church. But wherever the clergy was in power life was made unbearable for the Jews.

The Church never interfered in the internal affairs of the Jews until they brought their religious disputes to its notice. Jewish literature had to suffer the consequences. The Talmud in particular was subjected to the most stubborn persecution on the ground of untenable accusations made by renegades who asserted that it was inimical to Christianity. From Gregory IX (1227-1241) on the popes authorized inquisitions into the books of the Jews, and thereby created a source of torment and torture. The Church perceived a grave danger in the religious disputation, in which the Jews gained an undeniable advantage by reason of their exact knowledge of the Bible and their skill in interpreting it. Gregory, therefore, in the year 1233, prohibited these disputation with the Jews in order that "simple and plain Christians might not be ensnared in the nets of heresy." Later on, the Church had suitable ministers trained for these disputation, and former Jews in particular displayed their heroism with obtrusive zeal in this inglorious field. The great "Tournaments for God and the Faith" at Paris in 1240, at Barcelona in 1263, and especially at Tortosa (at which sixty-four sessions were held from February,

*Disputations and "Sermons of Conversion"*

1413, to November, 1414), were intended as impressive demonstrations in behalf of the Church. Their chief purpose, the wholesale baptism of Jews, was often attained by force, if not by persuasion. To the same province belong the "Sermons of Conversion" which Nicholas III initiated in the year 1278, and which the Council of Basle authorized by a general decree in 1434. The Jews were forced to attend Church, but the majority of them invariably went to sleep during the course of the services, and the sextons found it a difficult task to awake them.

While the Church vainly strove to make peaceful conquests among the Jews, the latter were still succeeding in converting Christians to Judaism. All the heretical movements which took place within the Church were ascribed to the Jews, and religious persecutions were inaugurated on the ground of their alleged pernicious religious influence. The harm done to Christianity as a result of these heresies was so great that, in the year 1267, Clement IV called for an "inquisition against heretical corruption," in accordance with which steps were taken not only against apostate Christians, but also against the Jews who were accused of having led them astray or having strengthened them in their purpose. This was the first time that the scope of these inquisitions was extended to include Jews. Later popes confirmed the bill by which the inquisition was established and paved the way for talebearing and religious persecutions.

**First Inquisition against the Jews**

The monastic orders, especially the Dominican and the Franciscan, were active agents in enforcing the decrees of the popes. They were founded during the rule of Innocent III, when the anti-Jewish policy of the

popes had reached its climax. One of their first tasks was the persecution of the heretics in Southern France,

**Persecutions  
by the  
Dominicans  
and  
Franciscans** for whose apostasy the Jews were held responsible. Thus the monastic orders determined upon the conversion or the annihilation of the Jews, and they had a hand in every

violent persecution. The Dominicans were supreme in Spain, where they prepared the way for the catastrophe of 1492. The Franciscans were more prominent in Italy. John Capistrano (1386-1456), a "crusade preacher of compelling eloquence," who was appointed inquisitor against the Jews by Nicholas V, journeyed through Italy, Germany, Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia, and Poland. His path is marked by the blood of innocent Jews. "Whether or not this is godly," observed the town-clerk of Breslau at the time, "I leave to the judgment of the ecclesiasts." Bernardino da Feltre (1439-1494) travelled from city to city for the purpose of delivering fiery addresses against the Jews and of recommending the establishment of loan-offices. "Thirty years ago conditions were better," complained Joseph Colon (1420-1480), "until the preachers (Franciscans) appeared in great numbers. They were a scourge unto Israel. They would have destroyed us every day, so that very often our lives and our possessions were in danger. If God, whose mercy never ceases, had not been with us, they would have swallowed us up alive."

Ecclesiastical theory gradually changed from a constituent part of canonical law and a subject for the clergy's instruction into a creed of the Church. Nevertheless it was often forgotten, and then the Jew-baiters recalled it to notice and managed to stir up ill-will, to stimulate the passions, and to arouse selfishness. Jew-

baiting was a dangerous and pernicious weapon in the hands of every priest, destructive of honor and happiness.

Martin  
Luther  
on  
Jew Baiting

In our days this procedure has been designated as the "Moratorium of the Sermon on the Mount," and Martin Luther, in his own caustic manner, branded it more drastically, as follows: "Our fools, the popes, bishops, sophists, and monks, have hitherto conducted themselves towards the Jews in such a manner that he who was a good Christian would have preferred to be a Jew. And if I had been a Jew and had seen such blockheads and louts ruling and teaching Christianity, I would have become a swine rather than a Christian, because they have treated the Jews like dogs, and not like human beings."

## 2. STATE LEGISLATION

### (A) BEFORE THE TIME OF CHARLEMAGNE

Because of the close relationship which existed between the Church and the State in mediaeval times,

The Jews  
under Arian  
Rule

the views of the Church often influenced affairs of state. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) declared that the Jews should be held

in perpetual slavery. Under the influence of the Church state legislation actually brought them to this condition. Originally the Jews were by no means slaves. The new German states which were founded on the ruins of the Roman empire found them as Roman citizens and allowed them to retain all the rights which they possessed as such. In accordance with the Germanic principle that every person was to be judged according to the law of his tribe, even the right of jurisdiction over civil cases was restored to the Jews. The ruling classes

professed Arianism and were less eager for persecutions, and the Catholic population was constrained to a certain degree of tolerance out of regard for its rulers. Theodoric the Great proclaimed the principle that no one should be compelled by law to adopt a certain creed. He protected the Jews against the atrocities of the clergy and the mob. His successors had proof of the loyalty of the Jews who bravely aided in the defence of the city of Naples.

The Visigothic law code of Spain did not alter the Roman laws with regard to the Jews. But when King

**The Visigothic Rule in Spain** Recared became converted to Catholicism in 586, the old decrees of the Councils were put

in force, and since they were not obeyed his successor gave the Jews the alternative of emigration or of baptism (612). Many took refuge in the latter and thus introduced the history of pretended Christianity which proved a fatal detriment to the land. The Jews who were forcibly baptized secretly remained true to the faith and customs of their fathers and openly avowed their Judaism as soon as it was safe for them to do so. The Councils were forced to adopt severer measures against them but they were unable to accomplish the destruction of Judaism. Confident of the spiritual power of their religion the Jews ventured to publish polemics with the result that some people were converted to Judaism. The bold war-like bishop of Toledo, Julian, did not think these polemics unworthy of refutation, "so that if he did not succeed in persuading the Jew, he might at least be of some aid to the Christian." Although Jewish children were dragged off to be brought up and educated in monasteries, nevertheless their loyalty to Judaism remained unshaken even to the third and the

fourth generation. The Jews sought to improve their lot by means of practical diplomacy also. In the year 694 King Egica had them robbed of their possessions and condemned to slavery on the ground of their revolutionary tendencies. Exceptions were made in the case of inhabitants of the mountains on the border, since these brave defenders of the passes were indispensable. This was the sad condition of the Jews at the time of the Arab invasion in 711, for whose conquests the Jews paved the way.

**In Gaul** In Gaul, the law of the Burgundian King Gundobald (473-516) regarded the Jews as Romans, and yet it was a step in the direction of the decrees of the Councils. As long as the Frankish empire retained its power it remained independent of the Church. Later on, the rivalry of the innumerable petty princes prevented the adoption of a uniform policy towards the Jews. In spite of all prohibitions the Jews still held high state offices, and it was not until a much later time that the Church became influential enough to obtain recognition for its decrees. The zeal to convert continued in full vigor, and the kings themselves did not hesitate to lead to baptism Jews who had close business relations with them. Finally, in the year 629, King Dagobert commanded the Jews of his land to choose between emigration and conversion, but under the Carolingians Jews were again residing in the kingdom of the Franks.

**In Germany** The only information we have about Jews in Germany at that time is that, in 321, Emperor Constantine declared the Jews of Cologne, with the exception of their religious leaders, obliged to assume the burdensome city offices from which all citizens of Cologne at that time sought relief and escape. It is

clear from this decree that the Jews belonged to the class of landed proprietors or wholesale merchants to whose lot these offices usually fell, and we may assume furthermore that they had been residing in the city for a long time. There is no historical confirmation of the elaborate legends which are told concerning the settlement of Jews in pre-Christian times in other cities, as, for example, in Worms, Regensburg, or Prague.

#### (B) AFTER THE TIME OF CHARLEMAGNE

When Charlemagne (768-814) reconstructed his empire, he formed an entirely different conception of the position of the Jews. He regarded them as foreigners who were subject to the law regarding strangers, in other words, they had no inherent rights, unless the king, as the advocate of those who were weak and without rights, protected them. The charters which the Jews of the time of Louis the Pious (814-840) received granted them protection of life, honor, and property, the right to manage their possessions, full commercial privileges, exemption from taxes and similar burdens, and the right to engage in the foreign slave trade, as well as to employ Christian domestic servants. In addition, they guaranteed to the Jews freedom of religious practice and the right of jurisdiction in accordance with Jewish law. In lawsuits between Christians and Jews evidence could be brought only by witnesses who were coreligionists of the person testified against. For this protection a lump sum was paid into the emperor's treasury, but it soon took the form of an annual gift. The blood money for the killing or wounding of a Jew was likewise paid to the

Charlemagne  
and His  
Successors  
Favor the  
Jews

king, and the Jew was privileged to bring his case before the king for decision. A "monitor of the Jews" saw to it that their rights were respected, and brought to trial those who violated them, even without a formal demand on the part of the Jews.

As a result of these privileges, the life of the Jews developed favorably. They were not only free to expand their trade and to take care of their landed property, but they also enjoyed the best of relations with the Christian population. The ecclesiastical measures regarding the separation of Jews and Christians were disregarded. The court, which took a keen interest in the Bible, as well as the nobility, treated them with marked favor, while the rank and file of the population was pleased with their Sabbath rest and their religious services and preferred Jewish to Christian sermons. The Church party opposed this state of affairs violently. Its representative, Bishop Agobard of Lyons (779-840), recalled to mind the utterances of the Church fathers, the decrees of the old councils, and the mandates of the earlier kings concerning social intercourse between the Jews and Christians, and sought to sharpen the consciousness of Christianity. At first Agobard met with no success, nevertheless he saved the canonical decrees from oblivion and made them an integral and never-to-be-forgotten part of the Church doctrines and legislation. Thus what was momentarily assumed to be a failure was turned into a victory for all time.

The political situation of the Jews at that time, and also at the time of the later German empire, remained unchanged for hundreds of years. In the year 1090, Emperor Henry IV granted the Jews of Speyer and Worms charters which were identical in content with

those of Louis the Pious. The Jews were still regarded as valuable citizens. When Bishop Ruediger enlarged the city of Speyer in the year 1084, he declared himself convinced that "the importance of the place would be increased a thousandfold if he were to admit Jews." Nevertheless the Church party never tired of emphasizing the contrary point of view and of insisting upon the separation of Jews and Christians. The occasion only was lacking to convert this acute opposition into a bloody outbreak. The religious tension prevailing in connection with the first crusade relieved itself by means of persecutions of the Jews. The campaign against the distant infidels was preceded by less dangerous massacres of the "enemies of Christianity" who dwelt in their midst, and the old friendly relations in which the Jews put their trust changed into plain enmity, as the emphasis was laid rather on the contrasts than on the agreements of the two faiths.

This persecution of the early part of the year 1096 was the first step towards the breaking down of the

**Germany before the First Crusade**  
**Jews Become Chattels of the Emperor**

legal position of the Jews. Their need for aid was mentioned in the ordinances of the Peace of God (Mainz, 1103), in which connection it was stated that the Jews were in need of extraordinary protection and of special relations with the emperor. This idea found its expression in the fact that the Jews were designated as "belonging to the King's chancery" or were "the King's wards." Under Frederick II this change was made legal. In his charter of 1238 the designation "the King's wards" is applied to all the Jews of the realm. The expression signifies that the Jews, both as communities and private individuals, were subject only to the imperial government and were

obliged to pay taxes into "the emperor's chancery" (treasury), whereas the rights which had been granted them remained essentially unchanged. But it was not long until this servitude was conceived of as the absolute dependence of slaves with respect to life and property. The Jews and all their effects were then regarded as the King's property. As Charles IV expressed it in 1347, they were entirely in his power "so that we, in our majesty, may deal with them as we choose." They were not suffered to leave their homes without a penalty, and were forced to bear in silence the seizure of their possessions. The more the idea of the dependence of the Jews developed (the Sachsenpiegel traces it back directly to the Roman emperors) the less the kings were conscious of their duty to protect them. "The emperors concerned themselves with the Jews only for their own selfish interests. Just as a farmer seeks to protect his cattle from every harmful influence, in order to derive greater gain from them, so the emperors and other sovereigns protected their Jews in order that their productiveness and ability to furnish money might not be impaired."

The fact that this protection had to be sought in particular instances by the communities and by individuals,

*Abuses of the System* and also that it was granted only for a limited time, was a contradiction of the theory that

the Jews were directly subject to the imperial government. Every new charter, however, offered the opportunity of demanding additional sums of money from the Jews. Another contradiction of the theory lay in the fact that the protection depended, not on the empire, but on the emperor. Accordingly, the protection ceased at the death of the one emperor and had to be repurchased

from the new ruler. The notion developed that every newly-crowned Roman emperor "could deprive the Jews in all parts of the empire of their possessions and of their lives, and could have them all killed, with the exception of a small number who were to be preserved as an eternal remembrance." It was even regarded as a proof of royal magnanimity when, in the fifteenth century, the Jews were allowed to ransom themselves by paying to the emperor a tax amounting to a third of their possessions.

The right to protect the Jews was one of the royal prerogatives which had to be conferred in a special manner and which was dispensed by the emperors in the course of time through purchase, exchange, pledge, gift, and bequest. The royal authorization to shelter the Jews was sought very often by cities which were anxious to attract taxpayers. In the "Golden Bull," issued in 1356, Charles IV gave the Electors the right "to keep Jews and to collect the income from duties." As a result of these continual sales the authorization to protect the Jews, and incidentally to exploit them, became so widespread that it ceased to be a special privilege and was no longer expressly granted. This was of double disadvantage to the Jews. From serfs of the emperors they became the wards of barons and of city councils, and their right of freedom of movement or location was limited to the smallest territories. Their expulsion from these narrowly circumscribed districts was thus made easier. Therefore it happened that the emperors, whose treasuries were always low, tried to replace the income from the protection of the Jews which they had thoughtlessly given up by means of new taxes.

The Jews lived in the cities, even though they were

not always under municipal control. The "Jewish rights" which they enjoyed were exceedingly varied, but the extraordinary laws which had been passed under <sup>Internal Life of the German Jews</sup> the influence of the Church were common to all of them. The Jews, like all foreign merchants of the great commercial cities, lived in separate districts, often in the best parts of the city. For example, in Cologne they lived near the town-hall, and in Frankfurt near the cathedral.

The Jewish communities had their own government. The seal of the community at Augsburg shows a two-headed eagle above which was a "Jews'-hat" and an inscription partly in Hebrew and partly in Latin. In the way of public buildings each community generally possessed synagogs, schools, a cemetery, a hospital, a theatre and dance-house, a bake-house, a bath-house, and a fountain. In most cases they also had their own jurisdiction under the supervision of the rabbi, the "monitor of the Jews," while a second rabbi frequently had charge of the academy. As regards their religious and social life Jewish synods issued important decrees which were binding on all the Jews. Attempts made by some emperors, for the purpose of tax-extortion rather than to help Jewry, to bring all the Jewish communities into one, united, national organization, failed because of the resistance of the Jews themselves.

We have no information concerning the size of the communities, but conjectures may be made on the basis of the list of martyrs. In 1096, more than one thousand Jewish corpses were counted in Mainz, presumably one-third of the community. In the year 1338 it is supposed that two thousand and six Jews lived in Nuremberg. In Frankfurt on the Main, however, there were only

eight in 1360, and fifty years later there were only three Jews who had to pay taxes. The Jewish communities did not keep pace with the growth of the large cities in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, since the incoming people were inimically disposed towards them and made it impossible for them to remain in the cities.

The Jews, like the whole middle class, migrated from Germany to the Slavonic east. Some Jews came from The Jews in Eastern Europe oriental countries to the lands of the Danube; some from Chazaria to Poland. It is very

likely that a few had been dwelling in all these countries before the nations were converted to Christianity. As early as the middle of the 13th century the Jews in Austria, Hungary, Poland, Lithuania and other lands of eastern and central Europe obtained charters patterned after German models.

While the influence of the monarchy in Germany continually declined, in the western half of the Carolingian empire it gained in power and resulted The Jews of France in the speedy national unification of the land.

The political authority of the bishops was quickly abolished, but it was replaced to some extent by the influence exerted by the clergy upon the minds of the people. For centuries the Jews lived under the protection of the old Carolingian privileges. The lack of union prevailing in the land resulted to their advantage. When they were driven out of one barony because of alleged crimes, a second one welcomed them. Philip II Augustus believed himself strong enough to draw the utmost advantage from the right to regard the Jews as aliens. After he had had the Jews arrested in the synagogues one Sabbath day in the year 1181, and forced them to pay a large sum of money as a fine, he drove

them out of his provinces a year later and confiscated their land as well as one-fifth of their loans.<sup>3</sup> In 1198, after the payment of a large amount of gold, they were readmitted, but the lords of the manors immediately declared them to be serfs attached to their soil and restricted their right of free movement. Their occupational life was subjected to the most stringent supervision, and they were forced to have all their private agreements recorded in the public register. As a result of this oppression a considerable number of them emigrated to Palestine.

The most grievous wrongs to which the Jews were subjected occurred under Louis IX, the Saint, (1226-

**The First and Second Expulsions** 1270). This loyal and devoted son of the Church rendered the measures of his predecessors even more severe and made the most arbitrary encroachments upon their property. In 1254 he had them driven out of the royal precinct, in order to secure from their property the means with which to conduct a crusade, but a few years later he readmitted them, this time, too, for the sake of gain. A commission of the clergy was occupied with the confiscation of the Jews' houses, and towards the end of his reign their movable property was also seized. Without the least opposition the Church enforced all its demands, such as compulsory Jewish badges, and compelled attendance at sermons of conversion. Disputations were very popular, and the decree of destruction passed on the Talmud was followed in 1242 by the burning of twenty-four wagon loads of Jewish books. At the beginning of the fourteenth century Philip the Fair had the Jews driven out unexpectedly, ostensibly, because of complaints concerning their business practices, actually, in

order to obtain possession of their property. The people, for whose relief the inhuman measure was presumably adopted, insisted upon the recall of the Jews, and the nobles and clergy likewise warmly pleaded their cause. Accordingly, they were readmitted nine years later for a period of twelve years, obviously after the payment of a large sum of money. Their treatment now varied according to the mood of the rulers and their need for money, and the Damocles sword of expulsion was constantly suspended over their heads. Both citizens and nobles, who were heavily in debt to the Jews, had an interest in the massacre or expulsion of their creditors. Finally, in 1394, Charles VI again decreed the banishment of the Jews within the period of one month and the confiscation of their possessions. One hundred thousand Jews, totally destitute, were forced to leave their homes and to seek refuge in Germany, Spain and Savoy. Only in the papal district of Avignon were they allowed to remain, naturally under church restrictions.

In Southern France the Jews lived at first under the most favorable conditions. In Narbonne the members of the Kalonymus family were designated, Southern France since the time of Charlemagne, as the "kings of the Jews," because of the esteem in which they were held and because of their extensive landed possessions. The counts entrusted Jews with high offices and commissioned them with the management of their possessions, jurisdiction over their subjects, and the collection of their taxes. The populace did not resent it but the ecclesiastical baiters reproved the princes for favoring the Jews to the alleged hurt of their own faith. The crusade against the Albigenses was directed at the same time against the Jews and their

protectors, and the counts were forced to take oath that they would never again keep Jews at their courts. From 1250 on the Jews of Languedoc (Southern France) shared the sad lot of their brothers in Northern France.

The Jews emigrated from Normandy into England, though there is reason to believe that the first Norman

**England** king invited them. Their rights were defined

in the twelfth century by the "Carta Judaeorum Angliae et Normanniae" (Charter of the Jews of England and Normandy), which is dependent to a great extent on the Carolingian charters, but designates the Jews, with their persons and possessions, as the property of the king and denies them freedom of movement and the right of emigration and inheritance. The English kings, who early set up a strong government, regarded the Jews solely as objects for financial exploitation from whom large sums of money could be extorted. In the entire history of the Jews, which contains so many records of injustice and violence, there are few acts which can be compared with these measures of robbery and extortion on the part of the English kings of the thirteenth century. A Christian contemporary writes of Henry III that he squeezed the life-blood out of the Jews and then mortgaged them to his brother so that he could tear out their entrails. His "Decree Concerning the Jews" conformed in all details with the desires of the Church. The "Domus Conversorum" (House of Converts) was erected in 1233 for the purpose of taking care of baptized Jews, but the property of the converts was forfeited to the State. Edward I was still more under the influence of ecclesiastical suggestions. His "Statutum de Judaismo" took offence at the money-dealing of the Jews, a fact, however, which did not hinder him

from enriching himself with their property. It is true that he granted them the privilege of engaging in trade and crafts and of acquiring agricultural property, nevertheless this measure remained invalid as the result of economic conditions in general and the hostility of the Christian population. The Jews were driven to misery and crime; almost three hundred of them were executed in London. As a result of their gradual impoverishment they no longer were regarded as important by the king. In 1290, therefore, he accepted the large indemnity offered him by the clergy and the nobles, expelled the Jews from his land, and confiscated their immovable property.

In Christian Spain the Visigothic laws which considered the Jews as slaves were still in force. Nevertheless, the needs of the state and the personal interests of the princes, whose power was greatly circumscribed, overcame the intolerance of the Church. Christian Spain was split up into many states, and the Jews were able to escape from oppression in one by taking refuge in another. Furthermore, all Christian states had the same interest, not only to keep from driving the Jews into the hands of the Moors, but also to win them as allies against the common enemy and to induce them to immigrate into Spain from Moorish provinces.

There were more than two hundred and fifty Jewish communities in the country. They formed a large proportion of the population, in certain places amounting to a third of the total number of inhabitants. Even in large places like Barcelona and Valencia the Jews formed thirteen percent of the population. Two-fifths of all the Jews of Castile lived at Toledo, where they occupied two boroughs.

Flourishing communities were destroyed because of sudden persecutions, but others received an influx of immigrants. The communities (*aljama*), located for the most part in districts surrounded by walls and shut off by gates, were organized as independent corporate bodies similar to the cities. They had the right of jurisdiction under judges elected by themselves, and were even allowed to execute capital punishment subject to the approval and confirmation of the king. After a long struggle on the part of the trade groups and of the clergy the right of executing capital punishment was finally taken away from the Jews of Castile in 1380. In 1412 they were subjected to the authority of the common courts in cases of civil dispute also.

The contributions of the Jews towards the army were of great value to the state. They took great pleasure in parading in the armor of Spanish

Jews in the Service of the State knights, were delighted with their games and exercises, and competed with them in military

undertakings. Alphonso VI, the conqueror of Toledo (1085), is supposed to have had no less than 40,000 Jewish soldiers in his army. His successors often entrusted them with the defense of fortresses and both praised and rewarded their bravery. Jews aided Ferdinand II when he conquered Gibraltar and gained the victory over the Arabs at Algeciras. In the numerous civil and family wars the Jews fought on both sides, and they atoned for their loyalty to Pedro I through the devastation of their communities. They played a not unimportant role at the court and in the conduct of the government. Owing to their skill as agents, linguists, and keen observers of men they received confidential positions in the kings' cabinets, were employed as sec-

retaries and interpreters, and were assigned important diplomatic missions to the courts of Mohammedan princes. The kings most frequently made use of their skill in bringing order into affairs of state. As financial administrators and as farmers of the revenue they realized large sums for the royal exchequer. Sometimes they were compelled to infringe upon the private interests of the population, a circumstance which did not raise their popularity. Judicial authority was not seldom joined to the financial administration. Due to the complaints of the Estates the princes often decreed that Jews could not hold any public office, but this did not prevent them from retaining Jews in high positions at their own courts, a condition which often was brought about by their heavy indebtedness to Jewish financiers.

The clergy insisted upon the enforcement of the measures of separation, and even made them more stringent in order to bring about a thorough-going separation of Jews and Christians.

**III-Will of the Church** They also managed to place the blame on the Jews for all the misery in the country. Conversions to Judaism, even of priests, were still of quite frequent occurrence, therefore the Church worked to convert Jews all the more zealously. The Church also claimed the right of jurisdiction over the Jews, in which demand it frequently met with resistance on the part of the civil power. The Inquisition, on the ground of mere suspicion or of allegations made for the most part by converts, assumed the right of passing judgment on the orthodoxy and authenticity of Judaism. We may readily understand that the Jewish communities employed the severest forms of corporal punishment against informers from their own ranks.

The hatred systematically fomented by the Church brought it about that any excitement of the population

**The Jews during the Civil Wars** was easily converted into an act of violence against the Jews. Ill-humor because of unsuccessful battles, or the proclamation of a "holy war" against the infidels led to excesses against the Jews. Under Alphonso XI (1324-1350) they enjoyed the golden age but in the course of the following civil wars in which they fought as loyal supporters of the legitimate king Don Pedro they suffered terribly. The revolutionists devastated their communities with ruthless fury and reduced them to absolute poverty by imposing the heaviest tribute upon them. The Jews never fully recovered from this disaster. Even when they enjoyed the favor of a ruler for a brief time it was only a "little breathing space under the shadow of the hangman's hand," and the Church agitators were permitted to venture more plainly toward their goal, the annihilation of Jewry.

A serious blow was struck in the summer of 1391. Under the influence of the inflammatory sermons of

**The Massacres of 1391 and the Marranos** Fernando Martinez 4000 Jews were murdered in Seville and the rest were forced to become baptized. The massacre of the Jews

now swept through Spain and Mallorca like a devastating storm, and only those who were willing to be baptized were spared. With the same fanaticism and with no less success Vincent Ferrer, twenty years later, preached the religion of love, and a further limitation of the legal rights of the Jews aided his philanthropic undertaking. Those who joined the Church at that time and professed their faith, at least with their lips, numbered tens of thousands. At heart they remained loyal to

Judaism, secretly practicing its customs, instructing their children in its doctrines, and strengthening them in the steadfast resolve to throw off at the first favorable opportunity the religion which had been forced upon them. Thus there was instituted a new kind of martyrdom. The class of the pretended Christians or the Anusim (those who were forced), contemptuously designated by the Spaniards as Marranos (swine), existed for hundreds of years and has not entirely died out even at the present time. They were numerous in all strata of society. The famous Portuguese minister, the Marquis of Pombal, once at a state meeting asserted himself, the Grand-Inquisitor, and even the King to be descendants of Jews. Constant suspicion against the "Conversos" or new Christians resulted in the establishment of the Inquisition and in the banishment of peace and happiness from Spain and later from Portugal.

Honorable conversion or expulsion of the Jews became a watch-word which the Church proclaimed more and more ruthlessly. Even though the rulers were convinced that without the Jews the land would fall a prey to impoverishment, and despite the fact that they entrusted Jews with ministerial positions up to the very end, nevertheless, they gradually yielded, in proportion as the last Mohammedan kingdom in Granada became weaker and weaker. The final and decisive factor was the general attitude towards the Marranos who had forced their way into the highest public positions and into all social circles and had earned the hatred of the supplanted nobles. They were accused of being secretly inclined towards Judaism, and the Jews were charged with having abetted them in this evil. For the purpose of stamping out the heresy of the Inquisition

**The Inquisition**

tribunals were established in 1480. In anticipation of its inevitable infamy all persons of influence struggled for a long time against the establishment of this dread institution, but they were unable to break the will of the Church and to save Spain from eternal shame. Within a year 2000 victims had been burned at the stake, and 17000 were condemned to the forfeiture of their property or to imprisonment for many years. Never in the history of the world were such premeditated and cold-blooded crimes committed as those perpetrated by this criminal court in the name of religion and of God. No means were regarded as objectionable for the apprehending of guilty or suspected persons. From time to time proclamations were issued promising clemency to those who confessed of their own free will, but compelling them to give information concerning all their accomplices who were then visited with the most terrible punishments.

With a resoluteness which can not be praised too highly the Jews, regardless of all the sufferings which they had to undergo, resisted all attempts to convert them. Judaism could not be exterminated by means of murder and violence.

The Jews  
Expelled from  
Spain Torquemada therefore dealt another deadly blow. On March 31, 1492, "the Catholic Monarchs" issued from Granada the unexpected decree that within a period of four months all Jews were to leave Spain. Despair seized the persecuted people; all attempts to have the decree revoked were futile, and the work of expulsion was begun mercilessly. Even according to careful estimates the number of those who were forced to emigrate amounted to 200,000 souls, a negligible proportion of the Jews preferred baptism. Unmentionable misery awaited the fugitives; the perils of a sea voyage, hunger, and

slavery became the lot of many, and only a few reached havens of refuge. Their future was unsafe, indeed. What Christian state was disposed to shelter people who had been expelled because of religious reasons? Spain had driven out its most productive and industrious citizens, and suffered greatly from this destruction of its prosperity. In recent times the decree of expulsion was repealed, but, despite repeated invitations to the Jews to return, only a few resolved to seek the land in which their fathers had lived to witness such glorious triumphs and such dire disasters.

In Portugal royal authority was stronger even from the time of its conquest, and in many instances the influence of the Church was stubbornly opposed by the rulers. For this reason the <sup>Conditions in</sup> Portugal kings were in a position to make light of all the decisions of the Church assemblies, to attract Jews to their courts, and to entrust high offices to them. The Ibn Yahza family held high state positions for many centuries. In Portugal there existed a sort of Jewish state-church under a chief rabbi appointed by the king, the only example of such an institution in the Middle Ages. But even the Jews of Portugal were not safe from temporary, local outbreaks, although the government always granted them its protection. After the persecutions of the year 1391 the country offered a refuge to many of the fugitives from Spain. Alphonso V (1438-1481), it is true, had the ecclesiastical decrees against the Jews incorporated into his law code, but he assigned the post of minister of finance to Don Isaac Abarbanel (1437-1509), the learned leader of his coreligionists.

In 1492 about 100,000 exiles from Spain sought refuge in Portugal, since Joano II, on condition of their

payment of a poll tax, had granted them permission to enter his land and had promised to provide them with ships. But the king did not keep his

The Expulsion from Portugal word. The fugitives were exposed to misery

and suffering, and women and girls were grossly insulted by the ships' officers and cast into the sea. The king himself tore children from their unfortunate parents and sent them to the American island of St. Thomas; the majority of them fell victim to the long voyage or to the wild beasts which infested their new land. Manuel the Great (1495-1521) at first declared himself kindly disposed towards the Jews, but when the heiress to the throne of Spain made her marriage to him conditional on their expulsion, he drove out all the Jews and issued a decree that no future king was ever to readmit them. Although he promised to aid them in leaving the land he nevertheless had all Jewish children between the ages of fourteen and twenty torn from their parents and brought up at his own expense in the Christian faith. At the expiration of the time fixed for the departure all the Jews were summoned to Lisbon where 20,000 of them were declared slaves in the great palace and forcibly baptized. This act of violence was regarded as too severe even by the bishops, and in 1497 the pope issued a granted indulgence for many years to these new Christians.

Before the expiration of this period the Inquisition had already been initiated. Later on, about 1570, the Marranos were allowed to emigrate upon the payment of large sums, and many of them took advantage of this. In 1821 the Inquisition was finally abolished, and in 1826 religious freedom was proclaimed. Since then Jews have again settled in Portugal, though in small numbers.

In Sicily, after the expulsion of the Saracens, the Jews were the only foreigners, but the close social intercourse of the various strata of the population had resulted in a certain amount of toleration.

**The Jews of Sicily** The Normans made the first attempt to convert Sicily into a constitutional state and to include the Jews in it. Their endeavors to regain the right to protect the Jews, a right which had been granted to churches, cities, and lords, finally succeeded under Frederick II. During his rule a law was passed making the Jews "wards of the king," and the provisions of this law remained the standard for all German legislation concerning the Jews. As a result of the movement in favor of unification the Jews were deprived of their right of self-jurisdiction. At the same time, the emperor employed them to supplement the finances of the state. He socialized the industry of dyeing and the trade in raw silk, and placed the control of this state-monopoly in the hands of the Jews who were practically the only ones engaged in these occupations. After the fall of the Hohenstaufens the unity of the state became seriously impaired, and the influence of the Church increased apace. Therefore, from the year 1300 on, the Jews were placed under Church supervision and were finally subjected to the Inquisition, while the rulers even concerned themselves with the furtherance of baptism. This state of affairs, however, did not prevent individual kings from being personally well-disposed towards the Jews; Jewish scholars especially were welcomed at their courts. The influence of the Church and the situation of the Jews changed according to the power of the kings. In Sicily, which was a dependency of Spain, their expulsion was decreed at the beginning of the year 1492, and the

earnest pleas of the city population succeeded only in delaying, and not in revoking, the terrible measure. In Naples, however, where they had been forced to suffer more severely in previous years, their banishment was delayed for several decades.

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## CHAPTER VI

### THE JEWS IN CHRISTIAN COUNTRIES (Continued)

#### I. ECONOMIC SITUATION OF THE JEWS

In return for the privilege of residence the Jews had to pay a tax. At first this tax was paid only once, at the time of immigration, but later on it became a regular yearly tax on their personal property or a poll tax. In return for this tax the Jews were free from certain duties and imposts. As a general rule this tax was collected in a lump sum from the communities, but in later mediaeval times the authorities dealt with individual persons who were forced to surrender huge sums, especially when they were possessed of means. In France, about the year 1350, Jews paid an entrance fee of 14 florins in gold for each family, of one florin and two tournois for each child or servant, and about half of the entire amount as a yearly tax. The tax lists of Castile for the year 1290 give a total of 28,013,450 dineros, but an estimate made on the basis of these lists and fixing the number of the Jewish population of 800,000 which have been estimated is very dubious. A tax list of the year 1241 furnishes us with the information that the German emperor in those days derived one-eighth of his revenue from the Jews; about the year 1300

Taxes Levied on the Jews

the sum of from five to six marks was imposed as a tax upon each person. Since the German emperors had thoughtlessly exchanged their right of annual taxation in return for a single payment, Louis of Bavaria introduced the tax of the "Golden Pfennig Offering," in 1342. According to its provisions each Jew or Jewess who was above the age of twelve and was possessed of at least twenty guldens (about \$8.40), no matter where he lived and by what lord he was ruled, had to pay a personal tax of one gulden to the King. Such direct relations with the royal government were not unwelcome to the Jews, but they were bitterly disappointed in their expectation of increased protection.

In addition to the foregoing taxes they were required to make certain contributions to the royal palace and to pay other indirect taxes in common with other inhabitants, except that the taxes were often required in humiliating form. Since the Jews carried no weapons they had to secure escorts and pay fees for this service. Later on, this escort money was demanded of them even if they requested no protection. From this tax there developed directly the poll tax. It was a tax which was levied only on cattle and Jews—a humiliating and shameful outrage which persisted in the majority of German provinces until the beginning of the nineteenth century. Spain collected a bridge-toll which reminds one strongly of the poll tax.

The regular taxes which the Jews had to pay were insignificant in comparison with the special imposts which were levied upon them. The continually empty coffers of the rulers could not begin to furnish the enormous amount needed for the maintenance of the court, especially when such

things as warfare, coronations, and the equipment and endowment of children rendered such greater expenditures necessary. On the most diverse pretexts and claims, and by means of threats and force, fabulous sums of money were extorted from the Jews. Occasions for extorting money were never lacking. "A race which could claim the benefit of no international comity and lay outside the pale of the Catholic Church, was delivered over as a prey to the spoiler with no other mitigation of its harsh destiny than his satiety or caprice might dictate." This plundering of the Jews was carried on in all countries. Henry III of England outstripped all other kings in this respect and succeeded in extorting no less than one million pounds from "his Jews" during the course of his long reign. Since the Jews of France had been subjected to a policy of violence for many decades, Pope Gregory IX, through a special bill prohibited the mistreatment or incarceration of Jews for purposes of extortion. This warning, however, was of little avail, for the princes still continued to extort money from them according to the standard methods. Emperor Sigismund (1411-1437) was an expert in devising new pretexts and occasions for levying toll upon the Jews. First he demanded a coronation tax, then a contribution for the Council of Constance, then compensation for the renewal of the old charters, then payment for interceding with the pope, then a contribution for a pilgrimage to Rome, and then a similar contribution for the war against the Hussites. Charles IV proved himself most shameless of all in his interpretation of the concept of the slavery of the Jews. While the persecutions which broke out in the year 1348 were still impending he granted the cities immunity for the expected massacres of the Jews and the

confiscation of their possessions in return for the payment of huge sums of money on the basis of agreements made in advance.

The Jews paid these great sums from their earnings, although they were being cut off more and more from the source of wealth. In Italy, Spain, and

**Occupations of the Jews** France they had been engaged in farming

ever since the time of the Romans, a calling from which they had never been fully ousted despite the zeal of the trade groups and the Church. They loved and cultivated their estates and were eager to extend them. In Germany also they acquired and cultivated landed property as free holders. About the year 1200 the "Book of the Pious" still forbids every other occupation, no matter how profitable, as long as there is a possibility of cultivating the land. The traveller Benjamin of Tudela was astonished when he visited Amalfi, Italy, and found that all the inhabitants were traders, not even one being a farmer. More and more obstacles were erected to prevent the Jews from owning land; then, too, the very uncertainty of life forced them to invest their money in movable property. For many years the Jews had owned city property, but their rights were perceptibly restricted and in many places abolished altogether. From the fourteenth century on the exclusion of the Jews from the possession of city land continued increasingly. They were limited to the possession of barely sufficient real estate for their homes and for their religious institutions.

The Jews were an active, useful, and stimulating element in the rigid and complicated economic life of the Middle Ages. In the Mediterranean lands, ever since the time of the Romans, they had engaged in

navigation and had a share in the import trade of the great sea-ports. They were also at home on the great inland avenues of trade, and were, therefore, capable of maintaining trade relations between the Orient and the Occident. At the Court of Charlemagne we find a Jewish merchant who frequently made journeys to the Holy Land. A Jew by the name of Isaac accompanied the embassy to the court of Harun al Rashid. It was the decree of fate that he was to be the sole survivor of this expedition and that he was to bring the Frankish emperor presents and messages from the caliph. Isaac of Nemes (probably Worms) acting as the agent of Hasdai ibn Shaprut, finally established communication with the Chazars which had been striven for in vain for a long time. Concerning Jewish merchants of about the year 850 we learn "that they speak Persian, Rumanian, Arabic, Frankish, Spanish, and Slavish, and that they travel from the Occident to the Orient and from the Orient to the Occident, sometimes by land, sometimes by sea." By one route they sailed from the ports of France and Italy to the Isthmus of Suez, and thence down the Red Sea to India and Farther Asia. By another course, they transported the goods of the West to the Syrian Coast; up the Orontes to Antioch; down the Euphrates to Bassora; and so along the Persian Gulf to Oman and the Southern Ocean." Further there were two chief overland routes. On the one side merchants left Spain, traversed the straits of Gibraltar, went by caravan from Tangier along the northern fringe of the desert to Egypt, Syria and Persia. This was the southern route. Then there was the northern route, through Germany, across the country of the Slavs to the Lower Volga; thence descending the river, they

**Jews as  
Travellers and  
Traders**

sailed across the Caspian Sea. Then the traveller proceeded along the Oxus Valley to Balkh, and, turning north-east, traversed the country of the Togosghor Turks, and found himself at last in the frontier of China. By virtue of their activity, their knowledge of languages, and their easy association with their coreligionists of other lands, they were not welcome, it is true, but yet greatly sought after pioneers of commerce. They deserve credit for a considerable portion of the glory and fame bound up with the great geographical discoveries of the fifteenth century, discoveries which opened up a new world.

When these voyages were not in the nature of pilgrimages or visits for academic training they were undertaken for commercial purposes. The Jews were wholesale carriers. They exported silks, furs, and swords from the Occident and imported various products of the Orient. They soon monopolized the spice trade, and frequently had to pay certain amounts of cinnamon and pepper as taxes. From Spain they exported wool, from the Slavic East they brought salt, fish, furs, and especially slaves, who at that time were indispensable for every great commercial and agricultural undertaking. A source of grief was the trade in Church vessels, a trade that was indeed forbidden by the Rabbis as well as by the Church Councils; but notwithstanding these prohibitions the clergy used the Jews now and again to bring these church utensils into commerce.

The entrance of the Jews into all branches of trade through the sale of forfeited pledges signified a breaking down of the vigorous system of mediaeval trade groups. This fact made all merchants their enemies, contributed to their being crowded out of commerce, and drove them

into the trade to which they later had recourse, that is, dealing in second-hand goods. Animosity towards the

**Restrictions upon Jewish Traders** Jews increased with the spread of Christian trade organizations. From the year 1200 on the Church likewise threatened to exclude them from commerce, while on the other hand the secular rulers advised them to devote themselves to mercantile pursuits. In the merchant guilds and the great commercial organizations like the Hanseatic League there was, of course, no place for the Jews. The prohibitions excluding the Jews from commerce were gradually converted into municipal laws, and after the year 1350 the guilds began their agitation to drive them out of the commercial field entirely.

As in commerce, the Jews engaged in handicrafts and industry early in the Middle Ages. When the

**Jews in Crafts** Western Roman Empire fell, they were numerous in all kinds of crafts, and remained artisans as far as they were allowed to do so.

They were conspicuous in all trades, from the most difficult to the easiest, and many of them were blacksmiths, masons, and tanners as well as bakers and tailors. Just as they worked in the mines of Italy and Spain, so they operated salt-works near Naumburg. They practically monopolized certain occupations, for example, silk weaving and dyeing in the Mediterranean lands; they were very active in the glass industry. In the year 1492 in Sicily the high imperial council, in its argument against the decreed expulsion of the Jews, brought out the fact "that in this kingdom almost all the workmen are Jews. If they leave all at once the Christians will experience a shortage of workers who supply their needs in mechanical objects, especially in iron, and who are skilful in making

horse-shoes and agricultural implements, and in equipping ships, galleys, and other kinds of vessels." In Germany, France, and England the guilds rendered it impossible for the Jews to engage in handicrafts, with the exception that they were allowed to manufacture articles for their own use. Later on this prohibition was confirmed by legislation. About the time of Luther it was recommended that the Jews should be induced to engage in all kinds of "coarse trades" and "unprofitable occupations."

The result was that practically the only occupation which was open to the Jews was that of banking, that is, money-changing for profit and the granting of loans in return for interest and pledges.

**Jews as Money-Lenders**  
"The Jew owes it to the money trade that, despite all national hatred and religious intolerance, he was yet allowed to reside almost anywhere, but lending at interest is likewise responsible for the numerous occasions upon which this hatred and intolerance manifested themselves in the most terrible manner. The need for borrowing money in times of distress caused the Jews to be welcome fellow-citizens, but the oppressive burden of the debt, the high rate of interest, and the envy with which the Christians regarded the accumulated riches of the Jews inflamed them to rid themselves of their despised and hated creditors, to rob them and to murder them."

The Jews were never devoted exclusively to banking and dealing in money, nor were they at any time the only people engaged in this business. In the early centuries the monasteries and the clergy were predominant in finance. The decrees against usury and the penalties imposed by the Church had no effect. The omnipotent

Pope Innocent III confessed that the imposing of Church penalties on the Christian usurers would be synonymous with the closing of the Churches. Accordingly, not only did Christian money-traders, like the Lombards in particular, openly carry on a very profitable trade in money, but also many classes of Christians as well as of the clergy took advantage indirectly of needy persons by means of shameful machinations of all kinds.

Only Jews were allowed, even commanded, to engage in money-lending. Just as apothecaries were given certain privileges in return for keeping a supply of drugs and remedies on hand, so the Jews were commissioned to satisfy the need for credit. In response to this need they became the financiers of Europe. Johann Purgoldt, the town clerk of Eisenach (fifteenth century), brought out the fact that the Jews who had not inherited property, and were excluded from handicrafts and commerce, had no other choice than to lend money if they did not wish to starve to death. Besides they performed an important social and economic function by means of their banking, and therefore this occupation was granted the protection of the law. The Jews deserve credit, not only because they furthered the idea of interest, without which there would have been no credit and no modern industry, but also because they developed the circulation of bills of exchange.

In Spain and in various German provinces Jewish bankers took over the entire financial management, as well as the control over the systems of taxation and coinage; they regulated property and the revenues and thus paved the way for the modern system of state finance. Money was scarce in the Middle Ages, therefore all classes from the princes to the most insignificant arti-

sans, were dependent upon credit. Contrary to all canonical laws, high ecclesiastical and worldly gentlemen, as well as cities, mortgaged offices, revenues, and landed properties to the Jews, and, notwithstanding all threats and prohibitions, the clergy carried church utensils into the homes of the Jews for the purpose of pawning them.

The rates of interest which prevailed during the Middle Ages were exorbitant. For this reason the **Usury** authorities supervised the business of money-lending and the Church forbade the Jews to charge "excessive interest." And yet there were many disputes as to what constituted excessive interest, for the idea varied at different times and in different lands. The legal rate of interest ranged from ten to three hundred percent; it was frequently fixed at forty-three and one-third percent. Such high rates as these applied to small loans on short terms; those who lent out great sums made such terms as they wished, for they were in a position to enforce their demands.

Huge loans to the Barons only increased the risk which the Jews took. They frequently learned that the weak often went to the wall in dealing with the strong, for many of their powerful debtors forcibly released themselves from the obligation of repaying their loans. Reductions of debt were of frequent occurrence, and the Jews were powerless to prevent the robbery of their possessions. Whenever the popes took a notion to grant those who participated in the crusades release from paying the interest or even the principal on their loans thereof the princes were willing to declare the debts of their favorites annulled or to undertake a general reduction or cancelling of the debts owed to the Jews. At first these encroach-

**Reduction  
and  
Annulment  
of Debts to  
Jews**

ments were isolated; Emperor Wenceslaus was the first to engage in the systematic plundering of the Jews, the spoils of which he used, not only for his own enrichment, but also for the execution of his policy towards the cities. This method of wiping out debts owed to the Jews soon taught them a lesson. They found it necessary to protect themselves against the issuance of such "decrees of annulment" in the bills of privilege which were granted to them.

Even apart from these confiscations which occurred repeatedly in every country, only a small percentage of the profits made in money-lending found its way into the pockets of the Jews. The lords and the cities received the lion's share. They saw to it that the Jews were allowed to absorb wealth like sponges, only in order to have it all squeezed out of them again. In France the occupation of money-lending was placed under the control of the state in order that the king might receive his full share from it. The expulsion of the Jews followed when this business could no longer be harmonized with the supremacy of the Church tendencies. In England the Jews became sworn commissioners of the king, for whose benefit they conducted their business. The nobles and the priests insisted upon their expulsion, because money-lenders who were supported by a strong power were intolerable to them.

Despite the high rates of interest which they demanded the Jewish money-lenders were by no means unwelcome. Cities did not like to do without them, and they were gladly welcomed in newly founded towns. Archbishop Conrad of Cologne stated "that the people had to treat the Jews fairly in order to keep them in the

Benefits to  
the State  
from Jewish  
Money-  
Lending

city and more so in order to attract them." Thus, on many occasions, the citizens anxiously looked about for Jewish money-lenders and summoned them in order to protect themselves from Christian usurers. Numerous illustrations of this procedure can be cited all the way from Germany to Sicily. Bernhard of Clairvaux, who was the first to apply the term "judaizare" to money-lending adds that in every place where there are no Jewish money-lenders the people suffered even more from the Christians. Thomas Wilson, in his famous "Discourse upon Usury," in mentioning the banishment of the Jews from England gives expression to the hope that all those Englishmen may be sent away who lend money or other goods for gain "for I take them to be no better than Jewes. Nay, shall I say they are worse than Jewes," because English usurers "exceed all goddes mercye." Thus it frequently happened that the expulsion of Jewish money-lenders was a great blow to the small merchant. The Jews were recalled to France because the people were anxious to have them back, and the nobles and priests recommended their readmission. In Brindisi in the year 1409, the inhabitants begged that the Jews be allowed to engage in money-lending and that "the greed of the Christian usurers be checked." In the decree of expulsion which was passed in 1492 many charges are brought against the Jews in Spain, but not that of usury. In Sicily, Ferdinand accused them of this form of wrong-doing also, but the city of Palermo declared the accusation unfounded and unjust. After the forcible expulsion of the Jews both countries fell prey to the most oppressive misery. The only thing which remained to the Jews from the occupation of money-lending was the hatred of

the masses, and this they had in abundance. One may read in Tolstoi's "Power of Darkness" the opinion of the common people and of the small merchants concerning interest. The great majority of the craftsmen and of the smaller citizens saw in the Jew their exploiter, and could always be easily incited to massacres in which those who were heavily in debt had an active interest. The struggling merchants in the cities envied the Jews their privileges, and the guilds very often regarded them as the pillars of the patrician system. On all sides was formed that hatred which found its expression in persecutions and expulsions.

## 2. SOCIAL POSITION, PERSECUTIONS

Animosity towards the Jew was fomented especially through ecclesiastical prejudice. Classes of population

**The Clergy  
Foments  
Persecution** which are of the same social level are never hostile towards one another, and there very often existed between Jews and Christians a tolerably friendly and neighborly relation which was inconsistent with the many acts of violence which took place. Just as the declaration of war in 1914 inspired the "patriots" of all lands with distrust and hatred towards neighbors and friends of many years standing for the mere reason that they were "hostile aliens," so the Jews of the Middle Ages experienced similar phenomena for they had to reckon constantly with a latent state of war. Their neighbors lived with them in peace and concord, and although the opposite condition was occasionally manifest, it was generally disregarded. The Church or its degenerate swarm of servants saw to it, however, that unfriendliness never disappeared entirely from the

consciousness of the people, and that it occasionally broke out in bloody persecutions. Each mighty quickening of the religious spirit led to a violent outbreak against the Jews. In the year 1096, before the first crusade, the Jews of Germany and France feared the worst from the crusaders. Not the crusaders themselves, but the rabble which hastened ahead of them, blinded by religious zeal and inflamed by the prospect of booty and plunder, fell upon the communities of the upper and lower Rhine districts. The honest citizens who had promised their protection were carried away by their frenzy and betrayed their neighbors. In Mainz alone more than one thousand dead were counted. At this first sudden onslaught the Jews resolutely chose the path along which they journeyed in all their subsequent sufferings. They heroically resisted the demand that they become baptized, although to comply would have meant safety, and preferred to forfeit their lives and the lives of their children rather than to prove themselves faithless to their God. Crusades and persecutions of heretics occurred but too frequently, and only in the rarest of cases did they fail to result in bloody excesses against the Jews. There was always some occasion for stirring up all the evil inclinations of the people against the Jews. The persecutions to which the Jews of all Christian lands were exposed during the period from 1100 to 1500 are numbered by the hundreds. The history of their heroic martyrdom presents a pathetic picture of the infernal sufferings undergone by the Jews, but also a picture of their heroic spirit of sacrifice, of unparalleled steadfastness, of incomparable vitality.

Rumors circulated by unscrupulous Jew-baiters, spread with the rapidity of an avalanche. Even before

they could be confirmed punishment had been inflicted, not only on the suspected persons, but also on entire communities and even provinces. The most effective

**The Blood-Libel** and most frequent charge was that of the murder of Christians on the ground of hatred or for ritual reasons. In Norwich, in the year 1144, a baptized Jew is reported to have explained the disappearance of a boy by asserting that the Jews of Europe annually determine by lot which community should furnish a Christian child for Passover. In the following decades this accusation made its appearance in different parts of England and France, and before a hundred years had passed it had been incorporated into theological literature. We meet with it in Germany at the same time. Towards the close of the year 1235 a mill burned down in the absence of its owner, and the five children of the miller perished in the flames. Crusaders who were passing through the town at the time, as well as citizens of the land, forthwith attacked the Jews; alleged confessions were wrung from several of them on the rack, and thirty-four met their death. The accusation was brought before Frederick II and a special session of the court was held immediately, but no conclusive decision could be reached. Accordingly, the emperor requested all the kings of the Occident to send learned converts to his court in order to examine and discuss the question from a thoroughgoing scientific standpoint. After a long investigation the commission declared "that neither in the Old nor in the New Testament is any statement made to the effect that the Jews use human blood, but that rather they are forbidden by the laws of Moses and by the Talmud to defile themselves with blood. In view of the frightfulness and the

repulsiveness of the matter, in view of the bond of humanity which unites the Jews with the Christians, it can by no means be assumed that those who are even forbidden the use of animal blood would risk their lives and possessions for the sake of human blood." The emperor forthwith declared all the Jews of the empire freed from all suspicion, and issued a decree prohibiting all persons from accusing them of this crime in the future.

But the accusation was by no means abolished. In answer to "the piteous complaint of the Jews of Germany," Innocent IV, in 1247, issued a bull prohibiting any accusation against the Jews.

*Papal Attempts to Protect the Jews*

"Contrary to the privileges graciously granted them from the apostolic chair, and opposed to God and His justice, they oppressed the Jews by starvation, imprisonment and by other tortures and sufferings; they afflicted them with all kinds of punishment and sometimes even condemned them to death, so that the Jews, although living under Christian princes, are in a worse plight than were their ancestors in Egypt under the Pharaohs. They are driven to leave in despair the land in which their fathers have dwelt since the memory of man." Therefore the pope forbade "the secular and clerical princes to devise infamous plots against them in order to steal and obtain possession of their property unjustly." This bull was confirmed by not a few of the popes, and it was even incorporated into the state legislation of Eastern Europe, in the same manner as the verdict of acquittal handed down by Frederick II was confirmed by later German kings. And yet all these efforts did not succeed in preventing the repetition of the charge. As long as it could be used as a pretext for plundering and for illegitimate enrichment

it could not be suppressed. It has been proved legally that on many occasions Christians secretly placed dead children in the houses of the Jews in order to rid themselves of troublesome creditors. An investigation of the charge was made only in the rarest of cases, as, for example, in the notorious affair of "Saint Simon of Trent," when, in 1475, the body of a three-year old Christian child named Simon, was drowned in the Adige, and the corpse was caught in a grating close to the house of a Jew. But this investigation was not conducted in a regular manner, for the rack was employed for fifteen consecutive days, and even then confessions were not obtained from all the accused. A papal chamberlain, who had been sent for the purpose of determining the facts of the case, expressed the gravest doubts concerning the conduct of the trial. The proceedings at Trent were fatal, not only for the local Jews, but also for those who lived far away. For centuries pictorial representations of this murder served to incite riots against the Jews.

Another accusation which claimed innumerable victims was the charge that the Jews stole the consecrated host wafers, that they mistreated the body of Christ in them until blood flowed forth, and that all their attempts at concealing their crime were rendered futile by unexpected miracles wrought with fragments of the wafers. From the year 1250 on this story was repeated endlessly, chiefly in Germany\*. The spread of this accusation was

**The Charge  
of Desecrating  
the Host**

\*Bacteriology has explained its origin. It has discovered a sort of fungus which, when exposed to the air, produces certain pigments. When placed on bread or other articles of food they form masses of minute blood-colored mucous drops.

very profitable, not only because it exposed the possessions of the Jews to confiscation, but also because many believers made pilgrimages to the places where these miraculous host wafers were kept. It has been proved that priests invented this accusation more than once for purposes of deceit. Early in the sixteenth century about forty Jews were burned in Berlin for alleged desecration of the host. Later on Joachim II ascertained through Melanchthon that the one who had stolen the wafers had made a full confession to the priest and that no Jew had had anything to do with them. Apart from isolated persecutions the accusation led to whole crusades against the Jews. In 1298 a nobleman from Roettingen, Rindfleisch by name, under the guise of an accusation of host desecration, declared himself appointed by heaven to exterminate the Jews. He marched through the land with a constantly increasing horde of followers, and for a period of six months he committed the most unheard of outrages against his innocent victims, contrary to the will of the cities. One hundred and forty-six communities were destroyed; in Nuremberg alone about one thousand victims were counted, and in Rothenburg about five hundred and sixty.

The records of the times are replete with the most terrible deeds of violence, and the number of those who perished is estimated at one hundred thousand, though this figure is undoubtedly an exaggeration. In 1336-1337, under the leadership of two nobles, the "Armedaders," there was formed a mob of five thousand peasants who, armed with pitchforks, axes, flails, and spears, traversed Franconia, Swabia, Alsace, the Rhine District, Bavaria, Bohemia, Moravia, Austria, and Styria, and massacred all the Jews of one hundred and twenty com-

munities in their lust for spoil. This time the Christian citizens gave the Jews no protection, and the princes themselves had to yield to violence and to make peace with the lawless elements.

Even these atrocious and bloody deeds fade into insignificance when compared with the terrible horrors committed at the time of the Black Death (1348-1351). From the southwest the pestilence spread over all lands, and with it the accusation that the Jews had poisoned the wells and thus helped the spread of the plague. Although Pope Clement VI averred their innocence and pointed out that the Jews themselves suffered from the malady, nevertheless from Spain to Poland no Christian land was free from the commission of inhuman acts against the Jews. A form of mental disease was added to the physical sickness; fear roused all the evil instincts of men, and the prospect of being freed from burdensome debts and of obtaining booty and plunder converted their bloodthirstiness into madness. In many places during trials, confessions were extorted from Jews on the rack, and, as a historian of the time writes, "their money was the poisoning which led to their death." In Germany especially the murder of the Jews and the movement which instigated it took place before the plague. Wherever the municipal authorities interceded in behalf of the Jews they were forcibly pushed aside; others made agreements with the emperor in advance, in accordance with which they were relieved of responsibility in case massacres of the Jews took place. Thus the murderers and incendiaries were allowed free rein, and in more than three hundred and fifty communities the Jews were "murdered, drowned, burned,

**Persecutions  
during the  
Black Death**

broken on the wheel, hanged, exterminated, strangled, buried alive and tortured by all forms of death for the sanctification of the name of God." When the massacre was over a degrading haggling over their property and spoil began, in which the emperor and his chamber participated eagerly.

The Jews of Germany never recovered from these serious blows. Their communities were annihilated,

**The German Jews Move Eastward** and those who could escape sought and found refuge in Poland, whose borders were willingly opened for them.

Within a few years the Jews were allowed to return to the inhospitable German cities which had driven them out "forever," but only to be exploited once more by the authorities and to be the bone of contention for opposing parties. The privilege of residence was now granted to them for a continually decreasing term; the right to eject them was always reserved, and the ecclesiastical laws of segregation were regarded as of particular importance. Movements like the wars of the Hussites and the crusades of Capistrano were catastrophes for the Jews. In view of the constant fear of death under which they lived it must have appeared to be a deliverance to them when imperial cities and territorial princes took steps to have them expelled and sought to get rid of them, not by means of violence, but on the basis of formal and legal proceedings. In 1420 they were forced to leave Mainz; in 1519 they were expelled from Regensburg, and this century, which witnessed the dissolution of the empire and the social wars in the cities, witnessed likewise the expulsion of the Jews from Germany, with all the spiritual and material suffering which this expulsion entailed. The fugitives were allowed to seek refuge in

the great Polish empire, a privilege for which they were very grateful and of which they availed themselves. The frequent occurrence of the names of Western German places in the family names of the Eastern Jews, like Eppstein, Günzburg, Landau, Mainz, Spira, Oettingen and especially their adherence to the German language of their former home, are monuments of a unique loyalty which, despite such terrible sufferings as those we have described, was unwilling to deny its old home and the cultural influence it had exercised. Even at the present time the descendants of the Jews of the Iberian peninsula have not broken away from the Castilian and Portuguese of their fathers.

### 3. INTELLECTUAL ACTIVITY

The Jews of the Middle Ages spoke and thought in the language of the country in which they were living; they employed it for Bible study; for prayer; for educational and belletristic literature. They were in close relation with the culture of their country. Just as the German Jews had their minnesinger, Suesskind of Trimberg, about the year 1200, so the Jews of Italy had their Immanuel ben Salomo at the time of Dante, and the Jews of Spain their Santob de Carrion half a century later.

The history of all the sciences which were developed and fostered in the Middle Ages, of philosophy and

**Jewish  
Scientists** medicine, of mathematics and natural science, owes the Jews an extraordinary debt of gratitude. At a time when ignorance prevailed generally they studied and elaborated the writings of classical antiquity which had been preserved through

the efforts of the Arabs, and thus rendered them accessible to the Christian countries of the Occident. The books which the Jews translated would fill a whole library, and the influence, both direct and indirect, which they exerted upon the culture of the Occident is inestimable. They gained fame as physicians, and all classes, even including the emperors and the popes, entrusted themselves to their skill, canonical prohibitions notwithstanding. But they also helped to build up medical science. The two famous medical schools of Salerno and Montpellier regard Jews among their most important patrons, if not their founders. The Jews also made great contributions to the science of astronomy. Isaac ibn Sid, reader at the synagog in Toledo, had a prominent share in elaborating the "Alphonsine tables" (1252) which were later improved by Abraham Zacuto, professor of astronomy at Salamanca, and in this elaborated edition used by Columbus. Levi b. Gershom, whose astronomical writings were translated into Latin at the request of Pope Benedict XIII was also the inventor of an astronomical instrument just as were other Jews who enriched the science of navigation. Their theoretical investigations and their practical experiments were of decisive importance for the "Age of Discovery." Without them Columbus, as well as Vasco de Gama, would never have been able to undertake their famous voyages.

Mention must also be made of the interest the Jews took in folk-literature. Collections of fables and maxims, **Folk Lore** stories, books on superstition and the like, were translated by them into Hebrew or the vernacular and formed very welcome reading matter. Hindu collections of fables such as "Kalila we Dimna"

and "The Seven Wise Masters" became known throughout the Occident only through the efforts of the Jews.

The intellectual activities of the Jews enabled them to feel at home in the lands of their sufferings, and their desire for education and culture exalted them above the burden of their misery. Their chief work consisted in the most intensive

**Educational Activities** fostering of their own religious traditions. Every father insisted that his child should master at least the Hebrew of the Bible and of the prayer-book. In many places academies for instruction in the Talmud were established, and pupils from far and wide, zealous students who traveled from Bohemia or Russia to Lorraine or France and from the Danube to Spain, received free tuition and free maintenance. The later German municipal laws sought to check this influx of ardent students. The story was told in the Middle Ages that Charlemagne summoned a famous scholar from Babylonia for the purpose of giving instruction to the Jews of his empire. This legend had its origin in the fact that, at a very early period, close relations were constantly maintained with the ancestral homes of Jewish learning by way of Italy and of Southern France.

**Biblical Commentators** In the northern part of France there arose a school of Biblical commentators who, in their deep and affectionate examination into the text of the Bible and in their intuitive understanding of its meaning, performed the greatest service which could have been expected during the Middle Ages. Rashi, as Solomon ben Isaac of Troyes (1040-1105), was called, wrote a commentary to the whole Bible, and became not only the favorite Jewish commentator, but exercised great influence upon the Christians. In south-

ern France, about the year 1200, David Kimchi gained fame as a result of his Biblical commentaries, and his philological works, as well as those of his brother Moses, served to guide and to instruct the Christian Hebraists.

Italy formed the connecting link between the Orient and the Occident, for it boasted of the first Jewish

**Life in Italy** writers of Europe. About the year 1150 the well-known Biblical verse was parodied into "From Bari goes forth the Law, and the Word of God from Otranto." The family of Kalonymus of Lucca, who had saved the life of Otto II after the battle of Cotrone in 982, settled in Mainz and brought along with it valuable traditions concerning southern learning and piety. Remains of its stonehouse and of the seals which it used in business and on which the imperial eagle is stamped have recently been unearthed.

Gershom ben Judah of Metz (960-1040) taught at Mainz, and gained such renown by reason of his admirable method of treating and explaining the

**French and German Talmudists** Talmud that he was called "The Light of the Exile."

As a result of his efforts many important decrees were issued, as, for example, the recognition of the law of monogamy. Rashi himself sought education in Mainz and Worms, and was the author of a commentary to the whole Talmud, an incomparable masterpiece of sympathetic exegesis which is regarded as an indispensable aid for the understanding of the text and which even today is included in all editions of the Talmud. The school of the "Tosafists," founded by Rashi's grandsons, busied itself with the critical examination of Rashi's commentaries as well as with the filling up of lacunae in the Talmudic legislation, and continued its work for almost two centuries in northern

France and in western Germany. One of its last representatives was Meir of Rothenburg, who was kept imprisoned in the castle of Ensisheim from 1286 till 1293 by Rudolph of Hapsburg because he had tried to emigrate without permission, and whose remains were not redeemed until fourteen years after his death upon the payment of a large ransom. His pupil, Asher ben Jechiel, went to Toledo because of the intolerable conditions prevailing in Germany, and spread teachings of the German rabbis throughout Spain. Jechiel's son Jacob composed the "Arba Turim," a work that is far inferior to the compendium of Maimoni in system and discernment, but which attained to great fame in the period of decline which followed upon the persecutions.

The Jews of Germany and of northern France received little encouragement or stimulus from their environment, and their religious and intellectual life was confined to the elaboration of the Bible and Talmud. But synagog poetry was still eagerly cultivated, and it contributed greatly to the formation of the liturgy. The poets were lacking, not in love, but in poetic fancy and in perfection and beauty of expression. Their song, "a cry of the blood of hundreds of thousands forcing its way through the earth," tells of the terrors and sorrows, of the pious devotion and the invincible religious loyalty of their communities.

In the lands of the south the Jews possessed general culture and an unbiassed proficiency in the sciences.

**Learning in Provence** After the expulsion of the Moors the interest of the Jews of Spain in science and poetry did not diminish. The Jews of Provence, in whom the intellectual achievements of the northern countries and of Spain met, gladly undertook the task

which had been imposed upon them by nature, that of effecting a union between the two centers of culture. Meshullam ben Jacob of Lunel, called "the prince," brought about the translation into Hebrew of all the classical works of Jewish philosophy and religion (about the year 1170). The Tibbon and Kimchi families were active in this field for several generations. In Provence there were formed enthusiastic philosophical groups which came into personal contact with Maimoni and revered his "Moreh" as a divine oracle. Accordingly, the opponents of rationalism saw themselves challenged to an inevitable conflict. They condemned Maimoni's inexorable rejection of all the sayings of Jewish tradition which were contradictory to reason, as well as his pupils' far-reaching metaphorical interpretation of the Scriptures and their abolition of the ceremonial law. In their delusion the calumniators of philosophy at the papal Court of Inquisition succeeded in having all the manuscripts of Maimoni burned publicly at Montpellier. The conflict was waged in all the countries of the south for an entire century and it ended in a miserable compromise, in accordance with which the study of philosophy was forbidden to anyone until after the completion of his twenty-fifth year. It is astounding that in this environment Levi ben Gershon was not afraid to assume the existence of primary matter, and that Hasdai Crescas had the courage to refute Aristotle and thereby take the first step away from the narrow-minded views of the Middle Ages. In addition to founding a scholarship the scholars engaged in polemics against Christianity, controversies which were not free from bitterness on either side.

"From the union of unbelief and longing there arises

mysticism." Kabbalah, pretending to be an ancient **Kabbalah** mystic doctrine was introduced into southern France and northern Spain during the period following Maimoni, and spread quickly, resulting in the elaboration of a pantheistic system. Its source-book, the *Zohar* (brightness) is supposed to have been written by Simon ben Johai about the year 160, but in actuality it was not composed until about the time of Dante. It was declared to be divine and, as such, it led to violent confusion in the minds of men. Its obscurity, together with its proscription of philosophy, resulted in reducing the entire spiritual life of the Jews to a lower level. Under these intellectual handicaps the science of exegesis degenerated alarmingly; and playing on letters, words, and numbers as well as the misuse of occult elements took the place of legitimate Scriptural investigation. The only good feature of this tendency was the fact that it counterbalanced the one-sided rational instruction which the *Talmud* and the Aristotelian philosophy provided; that it stimulated the feelings, made phantasy fruitful, and kept alive belief in the future and in the ultimate redemption. Kabbalah was a tower of strength during the centuries of oppression and sorrow, but it was fatal to clear thinking.

In Germany the mystic movement among the Jews had no speculative background, but it proceeded from **German** **Mysticism** practical piety, for which the German Jews of old were famous, from traditional secret doctrines, and from fervent seeking after God. Like German mysticism it associated many superstitious beliefs with the idea of the love of God, and imagined that it could obtain a mastery over supermundane forces as a result of external means. Samuel of Regens-

burg and his son Judah (12th century), each of whom was designated by the honorary title of "the Pious," introduced mysticism among the German Jews, whereupon it was combined with Spanish Kabbalah and received to it that magic character for which it has become noted. The seekers after God devoted themselves to their religious and social duties with the most scrupulous conscientiousness, imposed upon themselves the most stringent moral demands, and prescribed a pure and righteous course of conduct for their fellow-men. They incorporated such demands as these into "Books of Ethics," which served as models for popular instruction outside of Germany. The best-known and most comprehensive of all these works is the "Book of the Pious," which was written by Judah of Regensburg and which contains, in addition to much superstition, marvelous doctrines of world-conquering ethics, of the loftiest trust in God, of the most fervent longing.

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THE NEW CHURCH AT RATISBON, GERMANY, ERECTED UPON THE  
SITE OF THE OLD SYNAGOG, DESTROYED IN 1519. WHEN ABOUT  
500 JEWS HAD TO LEAVE THE CITY.—  
*A Contemporary Print.*

זה השער זוהר

# ספר הזוהר

על סדרה מקידוש טהלה  
ר' חמונן נזירין א' עיר צהיר  
תורה וזהר כבבם ורשות  
על קדש מרחיות טהרה  
מסמוקום שיש סדרה סדר  
סדרם מדרש ונשא ע"ג  
שען ש גמרא מדרש  
גדרה לבר מדרש מדרש  
גנולוקם ודרש נז' בכ"ג  
חסם זבל מדרש

# פה מנתובה

החת אמברק מפלג לרוגנו רזונם  
ונלען גז נזירין י"ה פדרה  
ש' סדרה סדרה סדרה סדרה  
בג"ג אמירות זבל מדרש  
ויעק בגדה מדרש סדרה זבל מדרש

TITLE PAGE OF THE FIRST EDITION OF THE ZOHAR.—  
MANTUA, 1558-1560.

Period III  
THE JEWS  
AFTER  
THE DISCOVERY OF AMERICA  
(1500-1750)



## CHAPTER VII

### NEW DWELLING PLACES

#### I. GENERAL REMARKS

The history of the Jews was not fundamentally influenced by the coming of the "Modern Age." Their dwelling places were transferred to Eastern Europe, but their destiny remained unchanged, exposed as before to the will of the rulers. The seeds of a future crisis, however, lay in the political and cultural conditions which were brought about by a changed conception of the world and the displacing of what had formerly been great and important factors. The religious conflicts which were conjured up by the Reformation diverted the thoughts of people away from the Jews without softening their sentiments towards them. The papacy, aroused to the necessity of launching a counter reformation, naturally declared war against *all* the enemies of the Church, and its strong defensive warfare included the Jews also as one of its objectives. Luther's reversion to the Gospel appeared to him, as well as to the Jews, as an approach towards the Biblical teachings and towards Judaism. Both sides built up their hope for the conversion of the other party on this same circumstance. In his pamphlet "That Jesus Christ Was Born a Jew," Luther demanded

Effects of the Protestant Reformation

that the policy hitherto in vogue against the Jews be changed, but when he realized that the wholesale conversions to his cause did not materialize, that on the contrary, the Jews were actually attempting to convert him to their faith, and that a Judaizing sect was being formed among the Christians, his wrath was aroused and he changed his attitude radically. In his two writings, "Concerning the Shem Hameforash" and "Concerning the Jews and their Falsehoods," he repeated in his harsh, passionate language a great many of the old mediaeval accusations and added suitable proposals for the treatment of the Jews. Luther thus transplanted into Protestantism that very attitude of the popes which he had denounced as despicable, and the Protestant theologians and jurists could draw from the teachings of Luther no other conclusions regarding the treatment of the Jews than the Catholic theologians and jurists drew from the canonical law. And yet, although it perpetuated so many of the ecclesiastic prejudices, Protestant nonconformity still remains the most significant landmark on the road leading toward the establishment of the civil state and toward freedom of thought and conscience.

The Hebrew studies which were stimulated by Humanism received a powerful impulse from the Reformation. The "return to the Bible" made a knowledge of Hebrew indispensable, and the Counter Reformation fostered the study of Hebrew in order to refute the Reformation party. Hebrew literature was now studied, not merely for the sake of contradicting and converting the Jews, but also from an objective point of view, and for this reason it was now treated with less prejudice. At the beginning

Spread of  
Hebrew  
Learning

of the sixteenth century John Reuchlin, the celebrated Humanist, successfully warded off the last attack of the Dominicans on Hebrew literature and opposed the burning of the Jewish books. Pope Leo X granted permission to have the Talmud printed. The danger of its complete destruction was thereby eliminated, for within a short time a large proportion of the Rabbinic literature was printed. The anathema was removed from Jewish literature and the Christian Hebraists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries studied it in a calm, unprejudiced manner, translated much of it, and refuted false accusations which were brought against it. J. Andreas Eisenmenger's "Revealed Judaism," a collection of Talmudic passages which are torn from the context, garbled, and falsely translated, or of far-fetched obscure hostile utterances against non-Jews, met with little notice upon its appearance, and was even rejected. It was not until our own days that it became the source book for modern anti-Semitism. Even in these "more gentle centuries" in which the authorities recognized the worth of the Jews, and sought to improve their condition, the populace regarded the Jews as responsible for every evil. A new political doctrine was to be born in the new world, however, and in the United States of North America there was created the first Constitution which declared the enjoyment of civil rights to be independent of creed and descent (1789).

## 2. THE PORTUGUESE JEWS

The majority of the Jews who were driven out of Spain and Portugal took refuge in the Turkish Empire, which had granted the Jews freedom of residence, move-

ment, and occupation ever since its establishment in Europe. The security offered to the immigrants attracted a considerable number of Marranos, who rejoiced in the opportunity of throwing off their pretended Christianity. There were soon 30,000 Jews in Constantinople and Salonica became practically a Judaeo-Spanish city. The settlers brought with them important commercial connections and useful knowledge, and as a result of their labor the prosperity of the land increased. They also increased the effectiveness of the army by giving instruction in the new method of warfare which had been introduced as a result of the invention of gunpowder. Sultan Bajazet II is reported to have said: "You venture to call Ferdinand of Spain a wise ruler, he who impoverished his own country and enriches ours." Jews were admitted even to high state-offices. Solomon Ashkenazi, as representative of the mighty Turkish empire, was one of the most influential and courted diplomats of his time, and Don Joseph Nasi (died 1579), the Duke of Naxos and the Cyclades, even cherished hopes for the establishment of an independent Jewish state in Palestine. It was unfortunate that the favorable position of the Jews depended entirely upon the arbitrariness and on the whims of the individual sultans, for mal-administration and the rapid decline of the empire shattered all the hopes which the Jews had cherished.

Various Italian cities provided other groups with an uncertain dwelling-place. Don Isaac Abarbanel was employed as minister by the King of Naples until the country came under Spanish rule. This event meant the expulsion of the Jews, although the majority of them were not banished until 1510 and

Jews in  
Turkey

the rest only thirty years later. Don Isaac left for Venice, which changed her alien-laws. In Venice the new term "ghetto" was employed for the first time, when a Jewish quarter was established in the year 1516. In 1593 Tuscany invited the Jews to settle within its borders in order to assist in the development of the new port, Leghorn, and granted them administrative and judicial independence which they retained until the year 1808. As a result the community became one of the best known and distinguished in all Jewry. In Ferrara, during the most prosperous century of its existence, when it gloried in art and science, in order and prosperity, the Jews were permitted to work in all freedom and their contribution was openly acknowledged. When the house of Este died out, its possessions became a part of Papal territory, subject to its laws. The popes did not always insist upon the observance of the canonical decrees. They did not even prevent the admission of Marranos as long as they held no public worship. Clement III supported the visionary Messiah Solomon Molko (burned at the stake 1532) and the adventurer David Reubeni, and intervened in favor of the Jews of Portugal against the atrocities of the Inquisition. Many Marranos settled in Rome and were allowed to live according to their customs. But when Paul III was forced to recognize the Inquisition and the Jesuit Order, the Marranos were handed over to the Inquisition, and those whom the Jews of Turkey could not rescue were condemned to be burned at the stake. Charges were again preferred against Jewish literature and the Talmud was once more burned in 1553. In this age of printing, however, the pyre was an inadequate means of destruction. After long and costly negotiations the Jews were granted permission to have

their books examined and printed after certain excisions had been made. Under Paul IV, who was not hindered from cruel fanaticism by his sacred office, all the canonical means of oppression, as well as the enforced dwelling in ghettos, were put into execution, and the courts wherein heretics were tried were constantly crowded. The same terrible laws were in force in all papal territories, even in Avignon, in Southern France.

In Southern France, Bordeaux, which offered the Marranos a refuge, but not freedom of belief, became an important stopping place on the road from Portugal to the ports of Flanders, which had flourished greatly as a result of the development of navigation on the Atlantic Ocean.

**Rise of Communities in the Netherlands**

Antwerp attracted many Marranos, but the tyranny of Philip II quickly deprived them of this haven of refuge. When the Netherlands, after freeing itself from the Spanish yoke, had forbidden any persecution on the ground of religious belief, it became the goal of the Portuguese Marranos. A few of them landed in Amsterdam in 1593, after a long and devious voyage, and secretly formed a community. They were soon discovered but the authorities tolerated them, only forbidding them to speak or write publicly against Christianity. A continual influx from the lands where Marranos dwelt now set in. Men of genius and versatility, of commercial ability and of wealth, of education and of culture, poured into the country with their families, and contributed materially to the prosperity and renown of the land and of the new communities. On account of its Jewish impress Amsterdam received the name of "New Jerusalem," and the greatness and wealth of the community is attested to by the beautiful synagog, by the admirable institutions





MENASSEH BEN ISRAEL.

Rembrandt

which exist there even today, by Rembrandt's numerous sketches and portraits of his Jewish environment. From 1635 on there was also a community of German Jews in the city, but they could not keep pace with their Portuguese brethren who treated them with disdain.

One of the spiritual leaders of the Amsterdam community, Manasseh ben Israel (1604-1657), one of the

**The Jews  
Readmitted  
to England** last of the Humanists, brought about the readmission of the Jews into England. He presented the thesis that Jews must not be lacking in the British Isles and proved it by the mystic doctrine that the Jews had to be dispersed "from one end of the earth to the other before the redemption could be realized," and by his arguments greatly impressed those who believed in the millenium. At that time several Marranos had already attained prominence in English commerce, and the right of free entrance for the Jews had been demanded on numerous occasions. Charles II, as well as Cromwell, intended to make use of the wealth of the Jews for their political purposes. On Cromwell's invitation Manasseh traveled to London in order to plead his cause. In 1656, notwithstanding the opposition of the clergy and of the merchants, Cromwell gave the Jews the right to settle and carry on trade in England on condition that they should not conduct their religious worship publicly and that they should engage in no religious propaganda. Accordingly a land rich in future possibilities was again opened up to the Jews. At first, of course, with the exception of a few privileged wholesale traders, they were considered as foreigners without any rights. A law of 1753, which provided for the possibility of naturalization, met with the most violent opposition on the part of the Tories, who

feared therein a denial of Christianity. When the law was none the less passed a popular wave of indignation forced the government to repeal it and thus, despite the esteem and high rank of several of its members, the community relapsed into a condition of mediaeval degradation.

Marranos had also secretly entered Hamburg likewise. In 1603 the citizens complained of the increase in the number of Portuguese Jews, but the senate granted the latter the right to settle as foreigners upon the payment of a large sum of money and with the provision that they were not to practice their religion openly. The community gradually developed like that of Amsterdam, but it never even approximately attained the latter's size and importance. The narrow-minded clergy showed itself very hostile to the Jews, but the Catholics really had more cause for complaint, because the Jews at least were supported by the senate. German Jews were allowed to settle from 1654 on, but only after many difficulties and under the protection of the Portuguese congregation.

The Marranos also opened the way to the New World. It is still a matter of dispute among scholars if Columbus himself was of Jewish descent, but there is no doubt that he was highly indebted to Jews for their research work in geography, for their maps, for their studies in astronomy and the invention of astronomical instruments. Marranos, too, brought Queen Isabella of Castile to consent to Columbus' undertaking and Luis de Santangel advanced the sum necessary for the expedition. To him Columbus directed the first detailed statement of the famous voyage and discovery and it may not be a mere chance that Columbus points out the coincidence between the ex-

*The Hamburg  
Community*

*Jews and the  
Discovery of  
America*

pulsion of the Jews and his own sailing, August 2-3, 1492.

Several Jews were among the members of the expedition, and Luis de Torres, who served as interpreter, was the first European to tread American soil. He settled in Cuba, and died there. He was followed by numerous Jews who hoped to find liberty of conscience and worship in the new world, but within twenty years after the discovery courts of the Inquisition were established. The early settlement of Jews in Peru and in Mexico is known only through the records of the Holy office which for centuries continued its unholy work there.

Brazil was the first part of America to be inhabited by a large number of Jews. Although the earliest Spanish and Portuguese settlers consisted mostly of banished criminals and adventurers, the Marranos longed only for a place where they might enjoy the liberty of professing frankly the religion of their forefathers.

The Dutch were willing to grant religious freedom and expected that the Jews would be ready to aid "the Dutch in any attempt." As a matter of fact the Jews gave their military and commercial help and were granted the same rights as other Dutch subjects. Indeed, their congregations were reinforced by newcomers from Amsterdam who brought with them the hakam Isaac Aboab, probably the first rabbi in the New World. It is estimated that at the end of the Dutch period more than 5000 Jews lived at Pernambuco. When the Portuguese reconquered the country they wanted to keep the Jews and pledged them "an amnesty in all wherein they could promise it." Nevertheless, their victory was followed by the dispersion of the Jewish population, and

only crypto-Jews (secret or Marrano) remained in the country. Many of the Jews emigrated to other Dutch territories like Curacao and Surinam, and, in the words of the authorities, they "proved themselves useful and beneficial to the colony." Others settled in British islands such as the Barbados and Jamaica, and because the Governor pleaded "that His Majesty could not have more profitable subjects than the Jews" they were recognized as British subjects in the colonies although they were still considered as aliens in England.

One group of Brazilian fugitives arrived in September, 1654, at New Amsterdam. Some Jews may have <sup>In the North American Colonies</sup> lived even before this time scattered here and there on the North American continent, and

unknown to history for the muster rolls of soldiers and sailors sent out from Holland to New Netherlands contain several names of Jews. Peter Stuyvesant, then governor of the Dutch colony was not inclined to give the Jews permission to settle, but the directors of the Dutch West India Company informed him that the refusal of refuge to the Jews "would be unreasonable and unfair. . . . They shall have permission to sail and to trade in New Netherlands and to live and remain there, provided the poor among them shall not become a burden to the company or the community but be supported by their own nation." The rights accorded to the Jewish settlers were very limited, they were not even allowed to build a house of public worship. Asser Levy, one of the early settlers, by no means tamely acquiesced in the Jewish disabilities. With remarkable heroism he resisted every violation of his natural rights and fought for the common Jewish cause through his own litigations. Nor did the legal status of the Jews

improve when the rule of the colony passed to the British. As for the Puritans in New England, notwithstanding their close contact with Jewish ideas, their affection for the Old Testament and their own experience of what religious intolerance meant, they were not willing to accord full rights to the Jews. Representatives of Roger Williams' "soul-liberty" doctrine were rare exceptions in the early Colonial period. Nevertheless, his teaching that "all men may walk as their conscience persuades them, every one in the manner of his God" could not but be gradually recognized as the ruling principle of a country where non-conformists and the persecuted of all lands and persuasions continually immigrated. Toleration took root and the Jews, too, benefited by the broader attitude. Their increasing economic importance contributed to the higher esteem in which they were held in public life so that before the legal ordinances were officially enacted, their actual status became much more favorable. New York's pre-eminence in trade attracted new Jewish immigrants, who came not only from Amsterdam, London and the colonies but also from Germany and Poland. They scattered through the other colonies also, in some, as, for instance in Georgia, they settled immediately after the establishment of the colony. Of special importance was the settlement at Newport, Rhode Island, at that time the principal port of the continent. Because of Roger Williams' liberal ideas the Jews found a friendly reception on the island and by means of later immigration developed a considerable and highly respected congregation.

When the War of Independence began, there may have been about 2000 Jews in the States. The war

records report many memorable deeds of Jewish patriots. The new Constitution of the United States provided that "no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any public office or public trust under the United States." This clause was strengthened by the first amendment: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." An authoritative interpretation of the meaning of the Constitution was given by George Washington, the first president: "The citizens of the United States of America have a right to applaud themselves for having given to mankind examples of an enlarged and liberal policy; a policy worthy of imitation. All possess alike liberty of conscience and immunities of citizenship. It is now no more that toleration is spoken of, as if it was by the indulgence of one class of people, that another enjoyed the exercise of their inherent natural rights. For happily the Government of the United States, which gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance, requires only that they who live under its protection should demean themselves as good citizens, in giving it on all occasions their effectual support." (Letter to the Hebrew Congregation of Newport.)

### 3. THE GERMAN JEWS

The German Jews (Ashkenazim), the second great group next to the Portuguese (Sefardim) were not very numerous in Germany after the wholesale expulsions which we have already described. Of the older communities only Frankfurt, Worms, Vienna, and Prague remained. The

Conditions  
in Germany

political decay of the empire preserved the Jews from complete destruction, for they could withdraw into the small towns, the plains, and the mountainous regions. The imperial Estates—the lesser nobility, clergy and bourgeoisie—which had possessed the privilege of protecting the Jews ever since the year 1548, now willingly opened their diminutive territories to them and fought many a battle in their interests. The Jews found a doughty champion of their rights in Joselman of Rosheim, a contemporary of Reuchlin and Luther, a petty merchant of Alsace who, despite his simplicity, gained access to all the princes of the earth. He was one of those of whom it is said,

“Rightly to be great  
Is not to stir great argument,  
But greatly to find quarrel in a straw,  
When honor's at the stake.”

He regarded it as his life work to secure lasting charters for the Jews, to keep them from losing the right of settlement anywhere, and to oppose all unjust accusations against his people. Wherever Jews were in need or in danger, he appeared on the scene without having to be summoned. Whether it was before the emperor or Luther, the rebellious peasants or the Reichstag, whether in Brabant or in Moravia, he appeared constantly as the evil genius of the enemies of his people, and very often he attained his goal. Not until the time of Gabriel Riesser did another Jew fight for the rights of his people with such energy and with such convincing power.

Joselman's work perished at his death. In view of the rapid dissolution of the empire the “protection of the eagle” did not mean very much. The emperors

withdrew to their hereditary domains in Austria and fell prey to the influence of the Jesuits. As a result of the hostility of the priests and the merchants the Jews experienced what might be called a comedy of expulsions

**Restrictions  
and  
Expulsions**

if it had not been such a wanton gambling with the happiness and honor of human beings. Every few years a decree of expulsion was issued, but shortly afterward the harm which resulted was recognized and steps were taken to have the decree repealed. Each time, naturally, large sums of money were demanded from the Jews. Ever since the year 1524 the Jews who came to Vienna were compelled to report to the police, and the Jewish inhabitants of the capital had to enclose their separate quarter with walls and gates. Not until the year 1764 were the conditions modified under which rich Jews, as well as those who wished to construct factories, were allowed to settle, but the requirement that the Jews report to the police persisted even up to modern times. The same conditions prevailed in Bohemia. About the year 1600 the Jewish community in Prague witnessed its golden age, and a generation later it obtained the right to govern itself, a fact to which the Jewish Town Hall still bears witness. The number of Jews in Bohemia gradually increased, because the nobles derived profit from their settlement, but the hatred toward them did not diminish. When, after the occupation of Prague, Frederick the Great of Prussia treated them the same as the other inhabitants, they were accused of having betrayed the city to the Prussians and 60,000 of them were expelled from Bohemia despite the remonstrances of several Western European governments. The effects even of this cruel deed did not endure "forever," because after a few

To the Hebrew Congregation in Newport  
Rhode Island.

Gentlemen.

While I receive, with much satisfaction,  
Your Address, replete with expressions of affection  
and esteem; I rejoice in the opportunity of assuring  
you, that I shall always retain a grateful remem-  
brance of the cordial welcome I experienced on  
my visit to Newport, from all classes of citizens.

The reflection on the days of difficulty and  
danger which are past is rendered the more sweet,  
from a consciousness that they are succeeded by days  
of uncommon prosperity and security. If we have  
wisdom to make the best use of the advantages with  
which we are now favored, we cannot fail, under the  
just administration of a good Government, to become  
a great and a happy people.

The Citizens of the United States of America  
have a right to applaud themselves for having given  
to mankind examples of an enlarged and liberal  
policy: a policy worthy of imitation. All profess  
alike liberty of conscience and immunities of  
citizenship. It is now no more that toleration is  
spoken of, as if it was by the indulgence of one  
class of people, that another enjoyed the exercise  
of their inherent natural rights. For happily

the

The Government of the United States, which gives to  
bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance,  
requires only that they who live under its protection  
should demean themselves as good citizens, in giving  
it on all occasions their effectual support.

It would be inconsistent with the frankness  
of my character not to avow that I am pleased with  
your favorable opinion of my Administration, and  
 fervent wishes for my felicity. May the Children of  
the Stock of Abraham, who dwell in this land, continue  
to merit and enjoy the good will of the other Inhabitants;  
while everyone shall sit in safety under his own  
vine and figtree, and there shall be none to make  
him afraid. May the father of all mercies scatter  
light and not darkness <sup>in our paths</sup>, and make  
us all in our several vocations here, and in his  
own due time and way everlasting<sup>ly</sup> happy.

George Washington

CONCLUSION OF LETTER FROM GEORGE WASHINGTON.

years the people were glad to have them readmitted into the land.

Within the empire the increasing culture of the ruling classes redounded to the advantage of the Jews. It was to the interest of the princes and the peers to attract "protected Jews" to the country, but the conditions under which the right of settlement was granted were laid down in the most petty and narrow-minded form. The petty torments and tortures which the Jews were forced to suffer at the hands of all the authorities, from the lowest to the highest, inflicted deeper wounds upon them than the cruel persecutions of the Middle Ages. Even the privileged Jews suffered much from the moods of their princely masters. This constant humiliation and degradation brought the Jews so low that they became the mockery of mankind. There was no difference at all between the Protestant and the Catholic territories, for the same distrust led to the same measures of precaution and to the same exceptional laws. The Jews were erroneously accused of every manner of crime and wrong doing, yet nobody regarded them as so despicable as to refuse their money. They were treated like children of the devil and yet people eagerly strove to open the gates of heaven to them by means of baptism. No one liked them, but everybody wanted them, and then, when the wind veered, drove them out again mercilessly. Restriction of the right of residence, marriage, and occupation dominated these ordinances concerning the Jews, which have rightly been called "Novels of Malice." It was not until the mercantile period that the Jews' spirit of enterprise gained recognition and that their entreaties for the right of residence found a willing ear.

The Great Elector of Brandenburg also had in mind to increase the well-being of the people when, in the year 1671, he favored various enterprises of the Jews who were dwelling in his new provinces and welcomed

**Attitude of  
German  
Rulers**

a number of their families to Berlin and its environs. But his successors had a different conception of the value of their trade to the state, and sought to lessen the supposed evil by means of oppressive taxation, by limitation of their commerce and restriction of the number of Jewish inhabitants. Despite the fact that this policy came to grief, the "General Privilege" of Frederick the Great also had but the one aim of keeping the Jews down. As a shrewd politician he utilized them for his purposes, as, for example, for his notorious coinage policy and especially for the industrialization of the country. In Silesia and West Prussia he allowed free rein to his officials, who recognized the value of the Jews in political economy.

The great mass of the Jews lived in Poland. There the kings had welcomed them, together with the German

**Conditions in  
Poland** colonists, towards the end of the Middle Ages, because they could render great services

to the land as capitalists, and could guarantee the rulers revenues which were independent of the Estates. The expulsions from Germany led to a great influx of Jews into Poland. As the result of constant increase the number of Jews who were living in Poland amounted to millions in the course of a few centuries. Ever since the time of Boleslaw IV their rights were confirmed by every king. Casimir III (1303-1370), the "king of the Jews and Slaves," extended the application of these rights to the whole of Poland, and when Lithuania was annexed, they were extended to the new terri-

tory also. Like the nobles and the bourgeoisie, the Jews formed a separate Estate. Their communities had absolute autonomy in matters of government and jurisdiction, of education and religious observances, and their members were subjected to the strict discipline and authority of the supervisors and the rabbis. The individual communities were grouped into district or national organizations, and "The Synod of the Four Lands," in which each community had representation, convened semi-annually. Lithuania had a similar assembly. The synods discussed matters of common concern, regulated the taxes to be imposed upon all the communities of the entire land, and were the courts of final appeal in judiciary cases. This autonomy, important though it was, led to severe internal conflicts.

In Poland the Reformation resulted in serious opposition to the Christian dogmas. The Karaite Isaac

The Beginning of Persecution in Poland Troki in his "Hizzuk Emunah" (Confirmation of Faith) expressed his opinion regarding the weak points of Christianity with remarkable frankness. The Catholic priests regarded the Jews as entirely responsible for the whole anti-Church movement and took steps to combat them ruthlessly. But instead of warring with spiritual weapons, they employed the rusty weapons of the Middle Ages. Antiquated charges of host desecration and the murder of Christian children served, not only to win new recruits for the Church, but also to keep the population constantly stirred up against the Jews. The citizens of the towns were always disposed to participate in riots against their Jewish rivals and to check them through vexatious municipal ordinances. The nobility hated and persecuted the Jews as their creditors. With the decline of

the royal power the diets passed restrictive laws. The life of the Jews in the cities was made intolerable, and they, therefore, betook themselves to the country and became the dependents of the great landed proprietors. It was the severest hardship the Jews ever were forced to suffer, to be thus exposed to the caprices and arbitrariness of the degenerate, harsh, and unrestrained Polish nobles, who took delight in treading "their" Jews under foot, in exposing them to disgraceful humiliations, and in gloating over their sufferings.

The direst misfortune which is recorded in Jewish history befell the Jews as the tools of the nobles. In

**The Chmielnicki Massacres** 1648 the peasants of Ukrainia, under the leadership of Bogdan Chmielnicki and with

the aid of Cossacks and Tartars, revolted with unheard of ferocity against the nobles and their commissioners, the Catholic priests and the Jews. The rebels overran Volhynia and Podolia, and all the Jewish communities were ruthlessly annihilated. This was followed by an attack of the Russians, who murdered and plundered in White Russia, took possession of Little Russia and drove out the Jews in accordance with the usual Muscovite traditions. Finally western Poland was overrun by the Swedes and because they spared the Jews the latter were regarded as traitors. 675,000 Jews are supposed to have lost their lives in this decade, and hundreds of thousands of them were dragged into captivity by the Tartars or compelled to wander about as fugitives. Captive Jews or exiles from Poland made their appearance in all countries, were redeemed and given shelter by their coreligionists even under circumstances that entailed great sacrifices. The "German Communities" in Holland and England received con-

siderable additions, and thousands of Jews found their way back to Germany.

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## CHAPTER VIII

### CONDITIONS OF SETTLEMENT

#### I. SOCIAL SITUATION

A Jew was allowed to settle in a place only because of the financial advantages which were expected of him.

**Taxes** Without money he was lost for the richer Jew was everywhere regarded as the better Jew. Heavy extraordinary taxes, such as those of the Middle Ages, were no longer imposed, and stipulations were made on a legal basis without, however, being less profitable for the state or for the princes. As a general rule the Jews had to pay a per capita and a property tax, and in most cases a heavy admission tax in addition. In addition they had to pay special imposts, for example, the tax imposed in Turkey upon Jews and Christians in return for being freed from military service, and a considerable communal tax. In Germany every Jew had to have a "pass," for which a large sum was demanded and which had to be renewed at the expiration of the period, generally at a higher rate. Besides, the German Jews were compelled to pay taxes which at times were enormous.

Such heavy demands, and misfortunes like conflagrations and other catastrophies, forced the communities to borrow money at a high rate of interest from Christian

money-lenders, even from churches and monasteries, and they often had to carry these debts for many decades.

*Jews as  
Financial  
Props of the  
State*

In addition to the regular state taxes there was a whole list of other imposts, partly ridiculous and partly humiliating, as, for example, "New Year money, Martinmas

goose money, ale-house imposts, money to be used on the fast days to purchase fish for the priests, and money for the purchase of pike for the University President during the Passion week." Voluntarily, also, the Jews contributed large sums for the state purse. When the French approached the Dutch frontier, and the treasury was empty, it was Isaac Pinto of Amsterdam who put a million guilders at the disposal of the government so that the Governor wrote: "You have delivered the country." In 1748 Samson Wertheimer of Vienna paid to Prince Eugen of Savoy 400,000 guilders which the emperors had promised him. Even in Poland, where money was very scarce, Jewish financiers occasionally helped the kings with enormous sums. "The financier of the American Revolution" was Haym Salomon, who gave great assistance to the government by loans of money and by advancing liberally of his means to sustain the men engaged in the struggle for independence at a time when the sinews of war were essential for success.

*Character of  
the Jewish  
Communities*

The Jewish communities as a whole were held responsible for the payment of the taxes, and the state organization which the Jews were allowed to maintain in many places, as well as certain boards on which rabbis were frequently appointed, were primarily for fiscal purposes and for the exercise of strict police supervision. At the same time

beneficial activities resulted, such as the improvement of the school system and of social service. Thus there was formed the Jewish "state within a state" which later authorities regarded as intolerable and as a reason for refusing to grant the Jews the right of citizenship. It was "oppression which produced a certain *esprit de corps* among the Jews," while they themselves were inclined to strengthen all the centrifugal forces.

Under these conditions each Jew was in the way of the other. Every new-born or immigrant Jew required space and food, of which there was only a **Ghettos** limited amount, for the ghetto was painfully overcrowded. In Italy and Germany the law requiring the Jews to wear the badge was strictly enforced. In Poland the Jews had "their own costume," which was in actuality a form of ancient Polish peasant dress. The city ordinance made the wearing of a beard compulsory for the Jews, and they were not permitted to shave it off. Obstacles were placed in the way of the Jews in purchasing food, for the Christian population was not to be allowed to suffer want due to supplying the Jews with food. The severest restrictions of all were placed upon the dwellings of the Jews. The ghetto was often situated in a low, dirty, unhealthful quarter and the inevitable prevailing unsanitary conditions made it particularly susceptible to contagious diseases. It was closed off by gates which were shut and guarded every night so that no one could enter or leave. The area of the ghetto was to serve for all time, it was not to be enlarged. Even today there may still be seen in some cities those curiously laid out narrow streets into which neither air nor light could enter and which were continually exposed to grave danger from fires and plagues.

Infant mortality in the ghettos was frightful, and the numerous births resulted only in the premature withering of the youthful mothers. Within the ghetto there was no room for trees, shrubs, grass, or flowers, and the inhabitants were forbidden to leave its confines for the purpose of recreation. Thus the Jews became estranged from nature, and their physical powers were greatly weakened. As a result of having to live together so closely the Jews developed a spirit of familiarity and of lack of respect, of desire for gossip and of distrust, which was not calculated to have a very beneficial influence on their character and their mutual relations.

The Jews were similarly restricted as to their vocations. There were a few Portuguese Marranos who were

**Jews in the Professions and in Commerce** accredited as the ambassadors of foreign princes, but no other public office was accessible to them. To the vexation of their colleagues they distinguished themselves as physicians in every land just as they had done in the past, but they were kept from other professions. Even in free Holland they were excluded from the merchant guilds, but this fact did not prevent the Portuguese Jews from carrying on a world-wide trade and from gaining the confidence of the commercial world. "Wherever they go to dwell, there presently, the traffic begins to flourish," says Manasseh ben Israel. They brought with them connections with Spain, Portugal, and the New World, and through the agency of their coreligionists they maintained a constant network of relations between the ports of the Orient, the North Sea, and the Atlantic Ocean. Through their agency the precious metals mined in America were exchanged for the products of the Orient which were brought to Antwerp, a city

which feared ruin when the Spaniards, in the year 1549, decreed the expulsion of the Jews. The merchants of Venice at this time as well as the magistrate of Bordeaux and the merchants of Hamburg a century later, stated that the expulsion of the Jews would result in serious damage to the commerce of their cities. In Amsterdam they became the pillars of the trade between the Orient and the colonies of South and Central America. They had a large share in the opening up of Brazil and in the founding of the sugar industry, not only in that country but in most of the West Indian islands. They became prominent in colonial trade. They transported their goods on their own ships between the old and the new world. Aaron Lopez of Newport was "for honour and extent of commerce" probably surpassed by no merchant in America. Excluded from the retail trade the Jews were compelled to direct their energies towards foreign and intercolonial trade. This resulted profitably not only to themselves but to the whole territory and contributed no little toward building up the colonies and toward giving them the strength that was necessary in the coming struggle for independence.

The Ashkenazic Jews had no such brilliant possibilities. They were forbidden, under a penalty, to engage

**In Central and Eastern Europe** in handicrafts, but wherever permission was granted to them they were very active. As far as Poland is concerned a deputy of the Quadrennial Diet (1789-93) stated as follows: "In the provinces outside of Great Poland half of all the artisans are Jews. Shoemakers, tailors, furriers, goldsmiths, carpenters, stonecutters, and barbers are particularly numerous among them." They also engaged in agriculture. In Germany they were not only excluded from

the possession of landed property but they were also subjected to commercial restrictions.

Excluded from trade, they adopted the occupations of peddling and second-hand dealing. They were the **Money-Lending** means of bringing within the circle of commercial life, groups of the population which lived far away from the bustle of the cities; they became the intermediators between the rural and the city populations, a function which the Jews still exercise in agricultural countries. In many cases they became money-lenders. The lending out of money at interest and on security was an easy way of making a fair profit, and all classes of the population, Jew and Gentile, willingly engaged in it. The Jews were forced into money lending since it was the only method of gaining a livelihood which was permitted to them, indeed, in many cases they were even obliged by law to adopt this occupation. Even though the imperial police regulation of the year 1530 prohibited interest in excess of 5 percent, nevertheless the territorial lords allowed a higher rate of interest because they derived benefit from it.

The Christians themselves fostered this money-lending since the Jews supplied their financial needs, and they patronized the Jews because the Christian money-lenders demanded much higher rates. But the odium of the trade adhered to the Jews, and the small merchants, who were particularly burdened by the high rates of interest, persecuted them with deadly hate. Of course there were some Jews who resorted to dishonest means in paying out money and in issuing promissory notes and receipts written in Hebrew, just as some of the Christians did not hesitate to cheat the Jews by extorting receipts or pledges from them without payment. The Jews were

also accused of circulating counterfeit money, whereas in actuality officials in high places were the money-clippers and the counterfeiters. In the mercantile age they were required to establish factories as one of the conditions of settlement, and as a matter of fact they laid the cornerstone for important manufactories in almost all the small German countries. In Poland they were responsible for the development of the agricultural industries.

The Jews took refuge in those branches of trade which the guilds had not as yet entered. A great risk

**Jews Develop  
New Fields of  
Commerce** was always bound up with them, and the Jews were the first to develop them. In

Germany, in addition to colonial products they soon monopolized the commerce in precious gems and jewels, silk and silk goods, which they imported from England and Holland. They imported the excess products of Poland into every land; grain, wool, lumber, leather, furs, in short, all these branches of commerce which Jews control even today. They frequented the fairs in great numbers and brought back from them all sorts of novelties. Their stocks were always remarkable for variety. This was one of the secrets of their success, and the other was that they disposed of their wares at a small profit. Since they had no regard for expense they had on their side not only their customers but also the officials and the landed proprietors. As a result of these circumstances the hatred of the merchants belonging to the guilds became more and more intense.

The "court Jews," the "financial agents," formed a special class among the Jewish merchants. They were indispensable intermediaries in the transition to the modern state, always at the disposal of the princes, and

therefore possessed of privileges and advantages over their coreligionists. Their functions were as manifold as the needs of their employers. They rendered great service to the state by furnishing the necessary loans, and especially by financing the wars. In addition, they supplied the needs of the army and were expected to provide food supplies and military equipment promptly whenever they were needed.

Every Jew engaged in commerce, even though he knew nothing about it, if not as an independent trader, then as an agent. "A Jew," as Glückel of Hameln (1646-1724) wrote in her interesting memoirs, "nibbles at everything." But their unfamiliarity with their wares and with the conditions of the markets resulted very often in their suffering heavy losses. Little actual profit remained to them from their manifold activities and diverse enterprises. Money ebbed away as fast as it was made, and even in the richest Jewish families of those times wealth was seldom retained until the third generation. The majority of the Jews were and remained destitute. The number of complaints which were brought against the rich Jews was equalled by those made against the "mendicant Jews" who infested the highways, secretly obtained entrance everywhere, and could easily be employed for every unworthy cause.

**As Servants  
of the State**

**Poverty of  
the Jews**

## 2. INTELLECTUAL AND RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

The commercial inadequacy of busy and apparently experienced merchants was caused to a great extent by their lack of education and their unfamiliarity with the

ways of the world. By this is meant, not that the Jews were illiterate, but that they used Hebrew characters exclusively in reading and writing. Their language

**Decay of Secular Culture** gradually became neglected and uncultivated because they lived in complete seclusion from their environment and had no share in

its culture. Besides, after their return, the Jews of Poland brought back with them the obsolete German of the Middle Ages which had in the meantime been intermingled with Hebrew and Slavonic elements, and so through this resultant Yiddish, corrupted the language of the Jews of Germany. Thus it happened that, although they spoke German, they could not make themselves intelligible to the people among whom they dwelt and that they became the laughing stock of their environment because of their "tongue-twisting dialect." The Portuguese Jews also took no interest in the language of their country, and remained far behind their ambitious countrymen in culture.

While the peoples of Europe were witnessing Humanism and the Renaissance, the Jews were experiencing the greatest humiliation; its natural consequence was a deep dejection. A gloomy and

**The Kabbalah of Luria** brooding spirit possessed them. With tormenting self-accusations they sought out the cause of their misfortunes in their apostasy from the customs of their ancestors, in their devotion to foreign culture. They perceived only one remedy for their unspeakable sufferings—the Messianic redemption of the world; they believed that it was their duty to usher in the Messianic period and to make suitable preparations for it. They therefore devoted themselves to the doctrine of redemption elaborated by the Kabbalah. A new star

appeared on the horizon of Kabbalah in Isaac Luria (1533-1571), who, by means of obscure metaphysical explanations, converted the old Kabbalistic doctrine into the belief in miracles and the redemption. Enthusiastic followers and disciples carried Luria's message throughout the world. His premature death gave rise to the legend that he was a saint, and the Jewish communities abounded in penitential moods and dreams of redemption, in prophets and miracle workers, whose excess of zeal caused the Kabbalah to degenerate into the "art of raving reasonably."

Reason and science were now treated with great contempt. When Azariah dei Rossi of Ferrara, in his *Light of the Eyes*, ventured to criticize the historical statements of the Talmud by comparing them with Hellenistic and patristic literature, his book was banned and proscribed. The

**Intolerance among the Jews** Marranos, who had passed their youth under the pressure of the Inquisition and even in their new dwelling places had suffered under the fanaticism of protestant divines, attacked the heretics personally. When Uriel Acosta, after his return to Judaism, dared to express his doubts about the agreement of contemporary Judaism with Biblical teaching he was excommunicated first at Hamburg and again at Amsterdam. Baruch Spinoza was expelled from the Jewish community of Amsterdam although his pantheistic system is not very different from that of Kabbalah.

The Portuguese Marranos returned to the religion of their forefathers with an abundance of enthusiasm but with a lack of discernment. They were confused in their secular as well as in their Jewish education and were completely dominated by mysticism.

In 1648, the year in which the mystics expected that the redemption would take place, Shabbethai Zebi announced himself as the Messiah in Smyrna. Due to his

**Shabbethai  
Zebi** fascinating personality and his familiarity with all the arts of Kabbalah he quickly gained a host of followers. The miracle which

all awaited as confirmation of his divine summons was not forthcoming, but the numbers of those who believed in him increased, and at the New Year's festival of the year 1665 Shabbethai had himself proclaimed in Jerusalem as the Messiah. Wild frenzy possessed the Portuguese Jewish communities of the whole world. The shrewd business men of Amsterdam and Hamburg, of Venice and Leghorn behaved like dervishes. Many Jews disposed of their possessions in order to be prepared for the hasty journey to the Holy Land, and others subjected themselves to penance and castigation in order to render themselves worthy of redemption. Everywhere the reports from the Orient were followed in feverish suspense by Jews and Christians alike. Those who raised their voices in warning against idolatrous worship of Shabbethai took their lives in their hands, for nothing could prevent the spread of the "belief." In the meantime, the first trial to which Shabbethai was subjected sufficed, and the "Messiah" unhesitatingly became converted to Mohammedanism. This act, however, did not deter his adherents from believing that his degradation was brought about only for the final realization of his mission. They still followed him in great numbers and formed the Judaeo-Mohammedan sect of the Dönme, which exists even today. The high hopes of the believers of Western Europe were dashed to the ground forthwith, as is the case after every defeat, the guilty

# שלחן ערוך

טדור חושן המשפט הנקרא בית יוסף

בכיו הבן מופת הדר הבהיר השלטן ת'ר' יוספ' קארו נדבן מדרד אפרם קארו  
על אשר אויר תורה וורחת כאדר הוועס בער צפת חוב' ב' ומיעי תורה נפוחת  
ביהודה ובישראל נורע טבו: וחבר הספר הזה קייזר מוחבב הגROL  
אשר עשה על הארכעה טורים אשר קראם בית יוסף אשר  
בם כה מעשיו הנדר וכל יקר ראתה עשו בה סבל  
טבקש ה' מציא מבוקש בנקכל דיז'וון על  
סחכונתו באין אומד ואין דברום והרכין  
לכל מטה ושלוחן וכסא ומונרו  
אשר לאו היילכו בטה: כיון משנת רבינו יוסף קב' ונתק



טסי רוחנית קלאסית י' פטון טלו נפוך פט ווינלאה ננדט:

TITLE PAGE TO CODE IV (HOSHEN HA-MISHPAT) OF THE  
FIRST EDITION OF THE SHULHAN 'ARUK  
BY JOSEPH CARO.—VENICE, 1565.



were subjected to bitter criticism and abuse. The misfortune of the people was changed into a catastrophe through the false Messiah's deluded and criminal prophets who—even after his death, stirred up the communities by means of his doctrines and showed, on the ground of the *Zohar*, that Judaism taught the trinity and the incarnate Messiah. Thus the disease which was caused by Shabbethai Zebi continued its ravages for more than a century.

It spread even to Germany and Poland and exercised a deleterious influence over the strong intellectual life

Talmudic  
Studies and  
the Shulhan  
'Aruk

which prevailed in Poland before the Cossack wars and which gave the Polish Jews an undisputed reputation as masters of the Talmud.

Those who immigrated into the land from Germany and Bohemia had succeeded in fostering once more the study of the rabbinic source-books. Solomon Luria, of Lubein (1510–1572), a scholar possessed of a clear and acute sense of judgment, gave a new impetus to the study of the Talmud. He elaborated the discursive and analytical method and opposed every authoritative collection of the material of instruction. Thus he became one of the bitterest enemies of the *Shulhan 'Aruk*, the new compendium which appeared in his time. Its author, Joseph Caro (1488–1575), began with a commentary to the *Arba Turim*, which analyzed the sources and included the literature of the last centuries. In order to make this great mass of material accessible to the young and to persons of no learning, Caro prepared a popular abstract of his work. He called his book, "Shulhan 'Aruk." Even as people could satisfy their hunger at a "prepared table," so could they obtain Halachic opinions without difficulty from this easily intelligible work. It

was a stroke of fate that the *Shulhan 'Aruk*, to which the author never attributed any special value, was regarded as a masterpiece. The book soon occupied a place next in importance to the *Talmud*; it formed the center of study for centuries following, and shared the same fate of becoming the target for anti-Semitic attacks.

The spiritual needs of the Portuguese Jews were for a long time supplied by the *Shulhan 'Aruk* and the *Zohar*, while the study of the *Talmud* itself hardly found an illustrious representative among them. In Poland the same desire for compendia manifested itself. In addition to Joseph Caro, Moses Isserles (1522-1572) of Cracow, a very gifted and many-sided scholar, had written a commentary to the *Turim*. When the *Shulhan 'Aruk* appeared he added the customs and habits of the German Jews, to which Caro had paid no attention at all, and modestly called his book "Mappah," the "table-cloth" for the "prepared table." In this completed form the *Shulhan 'Aruk* celebrated a great triumph throughout all Jewry. Not all the academies of Poland admitted the new work to their curricula. The school at Lubein for a long time refused to acknowledge its authoritative character. On the other hand it was received with honor in Cracow, in Lemberg, elaborated intensively, commen-tated and modified, and a comprehensive literature developed in connection with it, as was the case with the *Talmud*. The fear that the rabbinic studies would diminish with the spread of the *Shulhan 'Aruk* has by no means proved true. Nor has it become an easy reference book. After a century it was no less difficult to derive a decision from the *Shulhan 'Aruk* and its numerous commentaries than from the *Talmud* itself.

In Poland there developed a strong inclination

towards rabbinical studies because the atmosphere of the Jewish quarters was permeated with the Talmudic spirit. Each community had its academy. The larger ones attracted many hundreds of pupils, to whom food and lodging were liberally granted, while the teaching was traditionally gratuitous. Famous rabbis did not accept a new position unless they were enabled to conduct a large academy. They devoted their time mainly to studying and teaching and had but little leisure for the congregation. No patent of nobility was esteemed more highly than the crown of scholarship, and the shop keepers, who were apparently so avaricious and insatiable, considered education of more value than gold. Those who could not participate actively in intellectual work strove to make a name for themselves by improving and fostering the academies and by forming ties of relationship with esteemed scholars. All obstacles were cleared away from the path of those who devoted their lives to study. Their wives assumed the burden of earning a living in order that their husbands might have ample leisure for study. This wide-spread respect inspired the students with an irresistible thirst for knowledge, although at the same time it had the effect of inducing many to become students, not for the sake of science, but in order to receive material advantages. The students wished to shine, to become renowned, and therefore they always sought to find new interpretations of the Talmud and to make them current and generally accepted. Since this field, however, had already been exhausted, sophistry and ingenuity necessarily replaced investigation. It was no longer sufficient to understand the Talmud, but each student now had to elaborate it

in a dialectical way and to conquer his adversary in a battle of words. By means of absurd dialectic speculations and artificialities they tried "to work out something which was unexcelled, to weave a web of sophistical Talmudic phrases, and to split intangible hairs still further." From early childhood the youths were permeated with this spirit. At the age of twelve or thirteen a boy had to be a master of the art of disputation if he ever wished to amount to anything. Other subjects were not taught to him, and he learned only as much of the Bible as was necessary for instruction in the Talmud. Thus the youths were brought up without any knowledge of the actual world, but solely to arrive at a formal comprehension and a dialectic treatment of the Talmud.

As though "Pilpul" (as this dialecticism was termed in Hebrew) were not misfortune enough, mental confusion was also caused by the Kabbalah. In the uncritical and undiscriminating manner for which those centuries are known the scholars studied everything and strove to attain the impossible, the harmonization of irreconcilable sources. The unfavorable social conditions of the times oppressed their minds and hearts, and paved the way for Luria's conception of the world with its penances and ecstasies. Isaiah Horowitz (1550-1630) pointed the way towards an exemplary and consecrated life, and preached the doctrine of a solitary life, withdrawn from everything earthly, hostile to sensuality, and permeated with the longing for superhuman perfection. According to Horowitz, one must not lose a moment all day long in the struggle for sanctity and at the close of day one must subject oneself to thoroughgoing self communion and vigorous penitence. Even in the still watches of the night it

was far better to cry out in bitter lamentation for the devastated sanctuaries of old than to close one's eyes in sleep. The subtleties of the Halakah were connected with the doctrine of the redemption and were emphasized in the most detailed manner, and the spirit of asceticism overshadowed the already gloomy life of the Jewish masses. They lived and acted as though in a dream, inwardly inspired by an unattainable ideal, by the consciousness of a mission which was in marked contrast with their actual life. "Darkness covered the land, all striving after knowledge was banned, men moved as though deprived of life, longed for ecstatic visions, and tremblingly advanced towards the coming of the Messiah"—thus did contemporaries describe the life of the Jews in Poland. The final judgment arrived, but it was executed by the Cossacks and resulted from the news of the appearance of Shabbethai Zebi. Poland had its own prophet, and he soon denied the false one. But what availed that in a time so strongly marked by ecstasy? The masses did not renounce their belief in Zebi even after he had fallen, or even after his death. Unscrupulous, criminal adventurers, almost all of whom finally deserted the ranks of Judaism, kept "the belief" alive. This state of affairs produced confusion and disintegration, which propagated evil and conjured up the fiercest disturbances. Accusations, proscriptions, and counter-proscriptions were of every-day occurrence, and the communities became disrupted. Jacob Frank, an impostor who had traveled extensively and who was the head of the secret followers of Shabbethai in Podolia, did not hesitate to make the most severe charges against the Talmud, and Frank himself even had the effrontery to repeat the blood accusation.

As a result of the general confusion deep humiliation and sorrow prevailed among the Jews. The people, equally dissatisfied with the severity of the **Rise of Hasidism** Talmud and with asceticism, were on the verge of despair. The poor and uneducated masses in the Carpathian villages revolted against the tyranny of the rich and the learned under the leadership of Israel of Miedzyboz (1698-1758). He was a man of intense faith, permeated with an ardent longing for the divine, an enthusiast even unto madness, gladdened by the revelations which he continually received. The basic principles of religion which he taught were sincere love of God, loyal devotion and unswerving faith. His reputation for being able to conquer supermundane forces by means of an extraordinary art of invoking the name of God—hence the name of “Ba-al Shem-Tob”—brought him in touch with the people, to whom he preached, by means of simple and impressive allegories, fervent love of God, humble submission to His service, invincible faith in the power of prayer, and rapturous and joyous religious worship. This doctrine was as balm for the deep wounds of the people. Myriads of Hasidim (pious ones) arose within a short time and revered Israel as their “Zaddik,” as a saint.

The attractive power of this teaching proved its undoing, for the uncultured masses distorted its simplicity into the grotesque. Incapable of devoting **Its Distortion** themselves to God and of merging their identity in Him, they adopted only the unrestrained, external manifestations of the ecstasies, and desecrated the divine service by their frenzied conduct. Empty speculation only led to idleness. The belief in the mediatory power of the Zaddik, however, a concept which

developed under the influence of the old Russian dogma of the Staritz, had the most serious consequences. It produced among these "wonder rabbis" men of earnest piety who strove uprightly to help their unfortunate brothers, but it gave rise to as many swindlers who exploited the superstition and spirit of sacrifice of the poor. The watchword of the new sect was opposition to rabbinic Judaism, and the leaders of the prevailing rabbinic group took up the challenge ruthlessly. The conflict ended in a compromise whereby the Hasidim submitted to the authority of the Talmud and became the most rigorous guardians of its system. Thus a movement which had begun as a revolutionary tendency, terminated with educating the dull, idle, uncultured, and fanatic masses.

All these errors and confusions, tendencies and currents, spread westward into Germany and Holland.

<sup>Intellectual</sup>  
<sup>Stagnation in</sup>  
<sup>Germany</sup> After the terrible catastrophe of 1648 the Jews of Poland returned in great numbers to

the land from which, in similar danger, their ancestors had once come, and in Germany larger communities arose again. It was their ambition to secure celebrated Talmudists as their rabbis, and in Metz and Fürth, in Altona and Prague, well attended Talmud schools were established. Neither the pressure from without nor the popular imagination was so great as in Poland, but the subjects and method of education were not altogether different. The youths were kept remote from all secular education, and the Jewish culture to which they devoted so much time and energy did not appeal to them. The Jews shared nothing with their environment except contempt. They regarded the world as a vale of tears from which redemption would

come to them as the chosen people. Indifferent towards everything earthly, they remained in a state of moral and intellectual apathy, and allowed their language and their outward bearing to deteriorate, their knowledge and customs to grow petrified. The numerous messianic conflicts spread even to Germany. Here, too, the communities rent each other in hatred and discord, derision and malice joined forces with contempt. Contemporaneous descriptions of the communal life of those times present to us a repulsive picture of the terrible autocracy of the rich, of the inability and inactivity of the rabbis, of the arbitrariness and political chicanery of the community leaders. The fact that writers who were staunch adherents of rabbinism could present such a caricature of this world is a sure sign that rabbinism was near dissolution. It had its basis in the belief in authority, but all authority was now gone. It was based further on the fact that it was fenced in by ghetto walls and barred from the rest of the world. But now the walls of separation were crumbling, tolerance was blossoming forth, and the feeling that they were at home was stealing into the hearts of the Jews. The French Encyclopedists, the English Deists, and the German "Enlighteners" were knocking at the doors of the Jewish quarter, not to pave the way leading toward freedom, but to kindle sufficient light in order that the shadows might stand out clearly, to let in sufficient air so that the oppressive atmosphere might finally be recognized as unbearable.

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## Period IV

THE JEWS IN MODERN TIMES  
(SINCE THE YEAR 1750)



## CHAPTER IX

### EMANCIPATION

#### I. THE BEGINNINGS OF EMANCIPATION

When Lessing published his comedy, "The Jews," one of the most learned and impartial contemporary critics rejected the play on the ground that <sup>The Age of</sup> <sup>Mendelssohn</sup> an honorable Jewish character was an impossibility. Even some generations later Samuel Taylor Coleridge, the theologian and philosopher wrote: "The Jews of the lower orders are the very lowest of mankind, they have not a principle of honesty in them; to grasp and be getting money for ever is their single and exclusive occupation." The unassuming virtue of Moses Mendelssohn (1729-1786) broke down this deep-rooted prejudice against the Jews and showed the Jewish character in its purest and noblest form. "How free from bias is his spirit, how open his heart to every virtue, how attuned to all beauty." One of those rare characters "who was content with being called a man," whom the world called a "Christian" because of his virtue, and "who wished to appear only as a Jew," Mendelssohn won for himself a place of honor among German thinkers and aroused general sympathy and admiration as a philosophical writer. Following his example, his coreligionists, by devoting themselves to the language, culture,

and customs of their environment, strove to show that they were entitled to be considered at home in the country. Under the influence of his noble personality Lessing produced his "Nathan the Wise," the "song of songs" of tolerance. The Christians ceased to regard all Jews indiscriminately as despicable, but began to judge them according to their individual merits. Christian Wilhelm Dohm's work, "Concerning the Civic Improvement of the Jews" (1781), represented the view that the Jews were incapable of performing their duties as men and as citizens only because the rights of both were denied to them, and that the various governments made the Jews poor citizens by preventing them from employing their abilities in the country's interest. He went on to state that the only way of relieving the situation was by broadening the economic possibilities of the Jews and especially by granting them all rights, even including at a later period that of holding state offices. This heresy aroused great opposition, in the course of which the question as to the usefulness of the Jews for agriculture and handicrafts as well as for employment in the army was violently discussed. In his Edict of Tolerance (1781-1782) Joseph II of Austria abolished the despicable poll tax, and granted the Jews permission to attend the public schools and universities, but gave them neither freedom of occupation nor the opportunity to extend their rights of residence. The German princes wanted to make certain educational experiments with the Jews before they were willing to extend their rights.

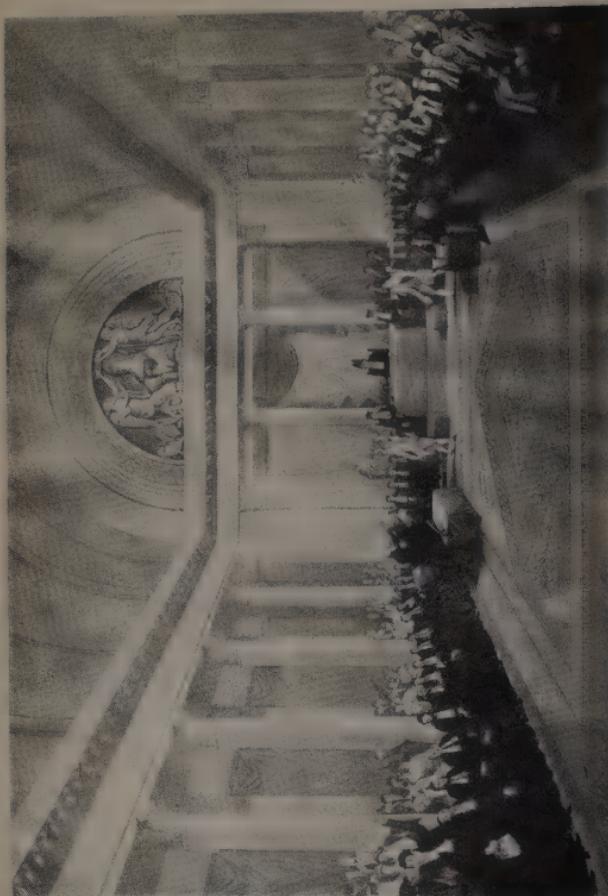
Dohm's view found an active echo even outside of Germany. Count Mirabeau introduced it into France through his work, "Concerning Moses Mendelssohn and the Civic Improvement of the Jews." The situation of

the Jews in Alsace was intolerable. When the problem "how to make the Jews of France more happy and useful" was publicly discussed, the answer given **Emancipation in France** was similar to the suggestions of Dohm. It was of great future significance for the Jew that these very questions were discussed in France on the eve of the great revolution. The Jews were not at once granted the rights of human beings when the National Assembly moved "their declaration of natural rights." Only after serious parliamentary debates and disputes and by means of an accidental majority did the National Assembly, on September 27, 1791, grant the full right of citizenship to all Jews who would take the French civic oath. Thus all the barriers which prejudice and hate had erected for the past fifteen hundred years were removed, with the exception that the Jewish oath remained in force until the year 1840. According to Talleyrand's declaration the Jews differed from the other French citizens in no other respect than their religion. They had been unexpectedly swept along in the current of civic life, and people were convinced that they would be able to swim through the stream in safety.

But the experiment was not entirely successful. Misery weakens moral strength, and the oppression of **Napoleon and the Jews** centuries breaks down character. The Jews did not immediately give up their old occupations and trading habits. The restless era of the revolutionary wars was not favorable to an economic evolution. In 1805 when Napoleon I was in Alsace, he was overwhelmed with stirring and exaggerated complaints about the wickedness and harmfulness of the Jewish element. Since he ascribed the entire blame to Judaism as a whole and not to the individual Jew, he

wished to crush it, to declare its "national laws" abolished with the destruction of the Jewish state; on the other hand, he was willing to tolerate its "eternal, immortal teachings" and to subject them to the control of the State just as he had organized the Catholic Church within his empire. He wanted the Jews as a corporate group to support his project and therefore convoked an Assembly of Jewish Notables at Paris. A new era of glory seemed to dawn. The Jews were so enthusiastic that they yielded to any command of the Emperor and answered all the questions put before them just as the mighty ruler wished. But not satisfied with the opinions of that assembly he determined to have them confirmed by a Jewish legislative body. He therefore convened the "Great Sanhedrin," so that it might imbue the necessary decrees with the force of religious laws. It was a grandiose gesture, such as the emperor dearly loved, a resplendent and ostentatious spectacle, but with no real significance or content. The decrees of the Sanhedrin (1807) consisted entirely of rambling and verbose declarations, the purpose of which was to educate the Jewish youth to fulfill their military duty towards their country, and to practice social loyalty towards their fellow-citizens. These principles were not new to Judaism but this authoritative declaration that adherence to Judaism did not preclude loyalty to country was regarded as very significant by the statesmen of this transition period. On this basis Napoleon organized a Jewish state-church which exists even today in Alsace-Lorraine. Despite the fact that he had accomplished his design, he subjected the Jews of the German districts to special legislation. It was supposed to apply to their education and to remain in force for ten years, but it soon became for-

ASSEMBLY OF JEWISH NOTABLES AT PARIS,





MEDAL COMMEMORATING NAPOLEON'S CONVENING OF THE SANHEDRIN (1806). LEFT: BUST OF NAPOLEON. RIGHT: NAPOLEON RECEIVING THE TABLETS OF THE LAW.



MEDAL COMMEMORATING THE EDICT OF TOLERATION BY EMPEROR JOSEPH II OF AUSTRIA, 1782. LEFT: BUST OF JOSEPH II. RIGHT: CLERICALS OF THE THREE CONFESSIONS.

gotten because there was no cause for complaint. Only in Rhenish Prussia did this "infamous decree" remain in force until 1847. Twenty-five years later, in connection with the bill which provided that Jewish preachers should be paid out of the state treasury, the French ministry attested that the activities of the Jews in the civil administration and in the army, in science and in art, in commerce and in industry, had given the lie to the slanderous accusations of their oppressors.

The principles of the revolution conquered by means of its victorious armies. In Holland, Italy, and the occupied districts of Germany liberty was proclaimed and the equality of all citizens before the law was announced. As far as the

Emancipation  
in the  
German  
States

Elbe and the Trave all poll taxes, all ghetto gates were abolished over night, and the Jews were allowed to move about freely like human beings, to engage in all occupations, and to hold any office. The grand-duchy of Frankfurt granted the Jews equal rights upon the payment of a large sum of money. The other states extended their generosity as far as to make certain educational experiments before giving civic rights to the Jews. Above all they claimed that the Jews ought to adopt occupations similar to those of the Christians, ignoring entirely the fact that the measures which they themselves had passed had prevented the Jews from moving about freely. They were far from acknowledging the humanity of the Jew, indeed, the government of Bavaria was so devoid of all shame that it openly stated its purpose to be "rather to diminish than to increase the number of Jews;" as a matter of fact the feudal restrictions regarding marriage and settlement remained in force. Baden declared the Jews to be

"state citizens with the right of inheritance," and with the right of settling anywhere (1808), "provided that they adopt occupations similar to those of the Christians." The Jewish religion was declared equal to the Christian, and a central council, which exists even today, was entrusted with the supervision of the communities. Only the kingdom of Saxony still adhered completely to the mediaeval laws, and it was not until the year 1813 that the degrading poll-tax was abolished by the allied forces. On the other hand, the Grand-Duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin granted the Jews equal rights to a very great extent and held out to them in addition the prospect of admission to state offices (February 22, 1812).

In Prussia, where Dohm's book had deeply influenced public opinion, the bureaucracy was unable to depart from the old fiscal standpoint and from its old distrust. It was not until the crushing defeat of Prussia at Jena, when the necessity of summoning up the forces for the restoration of the state became manifest, that the Jewish question was discussed anew. The municipal statutes of 1808 granted all inhabitants municipal and civil rights. Opinions differed as to the regulation of the conditions of naturalization. Enlightened statesmen like Wilhelm of Humboldt favored a law which would grant the Jews equal rights in return for assuming equal duties. After much deliberation the king signed the "Edict Concerning the Civil Status of the Jews" on March 11, 1812. It recognized the Jews as "natives and Prussian citizens," provided that they adopted family names and had themselves enrolled in the court registers within six months. It placed them on an equality with the Christians in respect to all burdens and rights, granted them freedom of movement and occupation,

abolished their special taxes and their special legal status, granted them the right to hold municipal, school, and university offices, and reserved the privilege of admitting them "to other public offices and positions" in the future.

Sooner than they had anticipated the Jews found the opportunity of proving that they were worthy of being incorporated into the state. All doubts of <sup>The War of Liberation</sup> their adversaries concerning their willingness and ability to serve in the army were dispelled during the War of Liberation (1813-1815). "The young men of Jewish faith were companions-in-arms of their Christian fellow-citizens, and we have evidence of many examples of their real heroism and of their praiseworthy contempt for the dangers of war. In a similar manner the other Jewish inhabitants, particularly the women, joined with the Christians in making sacrifices of every kind"—thus reads the tribute of honor which Chancellor Von Hardenberg paid to them.

## 2. THE STRUGGLE FOR EQUAL RIGHTS

After the expulsion of the French the fate of the Jews hung in the balance. They were uncertain as to whether the ghetto was to be re-established or whether <sup>The Congress of Vienna</sup> their freedom was to be confirmed. At the Congress of Vienna (1814-15) representatives of the Jews of Germany proposed that equal rights be granted to them in all the confederate states, but even the intercession of Metternich and Hardenberg could not break down the resistance of the petty states, and especially of the free cities. Finally an agreement was reached whereby the Assembly of the Confederation was as-

signed the task of regulating the civil status of the Jews as uniformly as possible and of guaranteeing them equal rights. "Until then the rights already granted to them in the confederate states shall remain in force." Some scoundrel replaced the word "in" with "by," but the leading statesman did not notice this forgery and thus the Jews were cheated out of their freedom. Only a very few rights had been granted the Jews "by" the Confederate States.

In Prussia the Edict of 1812 was as little carried out as little as was the promise of a free constitution. Its

Reaction in  
Prussia enforcement was confined to the small area which the state occupied at the time, while

in the new provinces which had been secured from Saxony and Sweden as well as in Westphalia, the mediaeval system of injustice still prevailed. Twenty-one different forms of legislation applied to the Jews of Prussia, and they had no right of moving from one territory into another. The 80,000 Jews of the province of Posen were excluded from military service and subjected to special passport regulations as well as to occupational restrictions. The Jews were excluded from all state and school offices as well as from holding any military rank, and even the benefits of the bill which granted pensions to disabled soldiers were not extended to the Jewish veterans. The trend of the times is amply illustrated by the founding of the "Society for the Propagation of Christianity among the Jews," and by the fact that this was approved by king and government.

At the Congress of Vienna attempts had already been made to abolish the "revolutionary" principle of self-determination and to support the principle of the "divine order." Several years later a complete reaction

set in against absolute authority. Teutomania, popular consciousness, and romantic admiration for the Christian

**Rise of  
Teutonic  
Anti-  
Semitism**

feudalism of the Middle Ages joined forces with it. The new "Teutonic" empire was to be a unit in language, customs, and belief; the Jews, as foreigners and as non-

Christians, were to have no right of citizenship, and it was evidence of magnanimity that they were granted the rights of human beings. The German people were deluged with a flood of lampoons, "a beautiful harvest of noxious weeds," and of bungling pamphlets of the basest and vilest character. Now the Jews were charged with being too practical, now with being too remote from the world. For some they were too conservative in their ritual and doctrines, for others they were too unbelieving, too revolutionary. According to some they did not participate enough in public affairs, and according to others they were too obtrusive; some complained that they did not engage in any new occupations, while others cried that they disturbed all occupational activity. Ludwig Boerne hit the nail on the head when he wrote, "You hate the Jews not because they deserve it; you hate them because they are successful." This literary warfare was not without its serious after-effects. It led to religious hatred, to greed for plunder, and to occupational envy, all of which factors, in the year 1819, joined forces for the purpose of threatening the peace, the safety, and even the lives of the Jews, and of destroying their possessions. A generation before all these outrages would have seemed impossible for all time.

The unfettering of the popular passions reacted on politics. Even in the constitutional and democratic states the emancipation of the Jews made but little

progress. Owing to the intercession of a Catholic priest the Bavarian Chamber was the first to recognize the claim of the Jews to an improvement of their legal status. The government acquiesced at first, but later declared that "the power of prejudice was too strong" to allow it to fulfill its promise. Not until the year 1828 did Baden abolish the special taxes which the Jews were forced to pay, but it did not even dream of granting them political rights. Even the Wurtemberg law of the same year attached so many conditions and limitations to the granting of civil rights that little actual progress was made. But the introduction of compulsory secular education for Jewish children and the organization of the Jewish religion by the state had beneficial effects. In Hesse also similar ideas were put into practice. In the wretched years of the demagogical persecutions the Jews saw their just hopes dashed to the ground. The very ones who had elevated themselves above the cultural level of their coreligionists and had adopted an academic career experienced the deep pain of being excluded from any appointment despite their scholarly abilities. Many of them lost heart and deserted their old banner, or surrendered to discouragement and despair, but the flower of the Jews remained dauntless, resolved to continue the struggle in behalf of their noble cause.

After the July revolution the citizens of southern Germany especially roused themselves to fight for their rights, and they recognized the fact that actual freedom had to be granted to all without exception. Leopold Zunz (1794-1886) advised the new Jewish generation, which had the advantage of a better education and a better conception

of the state, to struggle "for right and freedom instead of for rights and privileges." A leader and champion of the Jewish cause arose in the person of Gabriel Riesser (1806-1865), who later became the vice-president of the first German national assembly. His public appearance was due, not to a desire to fight for the special interests of his coreligionists, but to fight for equal and common rights for all people, rights which were independent of birth and religious belief and which could be forfeited only because of crime. The state was morally bound not to refuse the right of citizenship to inhabitants who were willing to assume and who were actually performing all the duties of citizens, since such a procedure would be a violation of the principle of justice. Riesser urged the Jews to organize themselves, to present petitions to the governments indefatigably, and not to permit any distinction between the different classes of their coreligionists or any confusion of the political question with the problems of a possible religious reformation. His periodical "*The Jew*," tracked down the enemies of the Jews unmercifully, whether they intrenched themselves on material, national, or religious grounds, because experience had shown him that, as in the Middle Ages, every obstacle was removed from the path of even the most unworthy Jew as soon as he yielded to baptism. It was this very dishonest situation which was repugnant to his indomitable love of truth. "There is only one form of baptism which can consecrate one to the nation. This is the baptism of the blood in the common battle for freedom and for the fatherland." As a result of Riesser's efforts, the question of granting the Jews equal rights formed a part of the program of liberalism which was enthusiastically favored by the best men of Germany.

The mile-stones in the struggle for the emancipation of the Jews were the same as those in the battle for German unity and liberty.

The ground had to be gained step by step, for each little civil or state or class or economic right had to be striven for separately, and access to every unimportant communal or state office had to be secured. In many cases that which the law allowed was retracted by the manner of its interpretation or by decree. Breach by breach the castle of prejudice and selfishness had to be stormed, and it took decades before it appeared to be conquered, at least legally. The pettiest interests still dominated in important questions of legal and moral significance.

Slow Progress  
of the Fight  
for Equal  
Rights

The doctrine of natural law and of the constitutional state was violently opposed by advocates of the Christian character of the state, whose arguments were always quoted for the purpose of disputing some legal claim of the Jews, but which were never put forward in support of the doctrine of Christian charity. The Prussian Feudal party which, up to the present day, has been the bulwark of political reaction in Germany, grouped itself around the principle of "authority, not majority." The government of Bavaria had not yet finished collecting the taxes which had been imposed some thirty years previously, and the impossibility of ever being permitted to lead a decent life induced thousands of Jews to leave for the United States.

It was not until the March storms of the "mad year" (1848) that progress was made in the movement for German unity and liberty. The National Assembly declared the "fundamental rights of the German people" independent of religious belief, and with this one statement

the intolerable struggle of decades was brought to an end. Even though the dream of a German constitution was

**Results of the Struggle** not yet realized, nevertheless the principle of justice and religious freedom was recognized.

The common political struggle for German unity, the blood shed by all countrymen in common on the battlefields brought the Jews nearer to their fellow-citizens and resulted in the founding of the German empire on the basis of freedom and equality. In the territory of the North German Confederation the law of July 3, 1869, removed "all existing restrictions of civil and state rights, caused by differences in religious belief" and abolished all the limitations which still held in the individual states. Later on the law was extended to the entire empire, while the laws concerning citizenship and judicial status completed the work of granting the Jews equal rights. In the largest part of the empire, however, the Jewish religion was not recognized as equal to Christianity. The new Weimar national constitution (1919) indicates therefore a remarkable advance in the opportunity of organizing all the Jewish congregations as a corporate group.

"Absolutism, modified by slovenliness," as the Austrian form of government has been designated, accurately describes its policy towards the Jews. **Gradual Improvement in Austria** Individual Jews may have been treated excellently, but to the Jews as a whole the laws of mediaeval darkness applied. It was easier for a Jew to become an officer than an apprentice; it was easier for him to secure a patent of nobility than to obtain permission to occupy a summer home in the country with his family. Very few of the philanthropic intentions of Joseph II were put into practice, but the majority of

the government regulations concerning limitation of settlement, and occupation, and marriage were not carried out, or else they could easily be evaded with the aid of the authorities. Metternich, who championed the cause of the Jews of other lands, rejected every reform, since he included reform in the "system of revolution" which he opposed. Such a policy necessitated the most curious and contradictory regulations, especially since the government did not desist from extorting large sums of money from the Jews by means of burdensome special taxes of all kinds. Nevertheless the idea of freedom spread even in Austria, and Jews and Christians made peaceful progress toward one another. The national movement of the year 1848 resulted in the granting of religious freedom to the Jews. Emperor Francis Joseph declared, "I want no special law regarding the Jews," and during his long reign he adhered firmly to the principle of the equality of all citizens. But the Church and the cities trembled for their privileges, and accordingly, except that the ghettos were abolished, not much remained of the freedom of the Jews, for even the acquisition of land was again forbidden them. The fundamental state law of December 21, 1867, eliminated all the legal differences caused by religious beliefs, and repealed all the existing exceptional laws in all the crown lands. Church opposition was not lacking, but the wave of freedom which was sweeping over the whole of Europe swept over Austria also and rendered all protest futile.

In Hungary, ever since the year 1807, the Jews had been permitted to serve in the army, but they were tolerated only in certain portions of the country, limited as to number, and excluded from most of the civil rights and occupations. In addition,

they were subjected to the most oppressive taxes. For example, it was not until 1846 that the king abolished the old vexatious and humiliating "treasury tax" in return for a single payment. At that time the country was in the midst of the struggle for emancipation which met with no less violent opposition on the part of Jews than on the part of the Magyars. The Orthodox majority refused to avow its loyalty to the fatherland and to adopt the Hungarian language. The Revolution was at first accompanied by anti-Jewish excesses, but the self-sacrificing struggle of the Jews in behalf of Hungarian freedom made a deep impression. Full and equal rights were granted to them for the purpose of "wiping out the enormous debt owed to the heroic descendants of the illustrious Maccabees." Two weeks later the Cossack armies trampled Hungarian liberty under foot, and the severest penalties were imposed upon the Jewish communities because of the participation of their members in the revolution. This time, however, good resulted from evil, because the king converted the uncollected remainder of the exorbitant penalties into an "educational fund" for the establishment of elementary and advanced schools. While the reactionary forces were in control emancipation was out of the question. The Jews utilized their respite in familiarizing themselves with the vernacular, without paying heed to the strong protests of the extremists in their own ranks. Finally, in 1867, after the "agreement" with Austria, the Hungarian national council decreed the absolute civil and national equality of the Jews.

Holland was the only state in which equal rights had been granted to all peoples without restriction ever since the year 1815, and in which this principle had been car-

ried out with equal benevolence and good will by rulers and people alike. Scrupulous attention, also, was devoted to the inner development of the Jews, particularly in their relation to the state as a religious group. The Netherlands, where Church and State were separated in 1848, offered a most instructive example of far-reaching religious tolerance.

Belgium, which adopted the French consistory organization, has since 1835, contributed appreciable sums toward the maintenance of the Jewish religious body.

Free Switzerland, alas, offers a most significant illustration of the great difficulties the Jews have experienced in their struggle for justice. Only in the

**In Switzerland** Canton of Aargau were they tolerated, and there only as peddlers and cattle dealers and, despite their request they were, as late as 1842, excluded from military service. Even during the period of the French intervention no more Jews were admitted, and later even the protests of the foreign powers fell on deaf ears. A decided advance in the struggle for equality was made when a number of Genevan Jews were naturalized. The Cantons that sheltered Jews demanded that the new constitution of 1848 accord equal rights to all. In 1856 the legislative authorities acceded to this demand although individual cantons still denied Jews the right of settlement. Finally a new decree to the effect that all Swiss, without regard to creed, should enjoy equal rights and religious freedom was accepted by the people in 1866, and confirmed by the federal constitution seven years later.

The North European lands closed their doors against the Jew until the nineteenth century because the clergy feared that even a small number of Jews spelled danger

for the purity of the evangelical faith. Yet the conversion of a Jew was always celebrated as a great triumph although it was not always the best type of Jew who immigrated into the land under these conditions. It was only when the Scandinavian states began to participate more intensively in the political and economic development of Europe that the Jew gradually struck root in them. Interest in the methods of Jewish commercial and industrial activity began to manifest itself; and a better understanding between the Jewish and Christian merchants developed. The idea of tolerance, characteristic of the Enlightenment period, found acceptance. The cultured classes were particularly influenced. In the course of time the position of the Jew was improved and in the nineteenth century the "Mosaists" were accorded an equality which was scrupulously observed.

In Italy which, as Metternich said, was only a "geographical expression," the old legislation was again enforced after the expulsion of the French, and

**In Italy** the Jews were regarded anew as outcasts.

In the papal territory they were forced to return to the ghetto. The champions of Italian freedom and unity made the cause of the Jews their own. When Pius IX became pope he granted some concessions to the Jews, but the people of Rome favored their absolute equality and broke down the gates of the ghetto on April 17, 1848. The distinguished writer and statesman, Massimo d'Azeglio, in a popular and widely read pamphlet, advocated the abolition of their legal restrictions on the ground of Christian charity. A few months after the announcement of the constitution at Piedmont the equality of the Jews was proclaimed, and from there the

victorious standards of the "Risorgimento" bore it throughout the whole kingdom of Italy. Only in the papal territory did the majority of the mediaeval laws as well as the importunate zeal for converting Jewish children persist. The ghetto of Rome teemed with poverty, filth, and decay, and it was not until the entrance of the Italian troops into Rome on September 20, 1870, that the Jews gained their freedom.

England demanded that all its representatives and officials take the oath of office on "their true faith as a <sup>In England</sup> Christian." When the absolute authority of the High Church was broken down, and equal rights were granted to dissenters and to Catholics, there was no just argument for the exclusion of the Jews. For this reason the Liberal Party proposed their emancipation, but did not succeed in accomplishing its purpose. In his essay on "The Civil Disabilities of the Jews," the most valuable document of the entire emancipation literature, Lord Macaulay assails his adversaries with implacable logic. He met the objection that Jews should not be allowed to rule a Christian country by pointing out that in a land inhabited jointly by Christians and Jews magisterial positions should be held by Jews as well as by Christians. To the accusation that the Jews were lacking in patriotism he replied, that, after the treatment which had been accorded to them hitherto, they could not be expected to have a very favorable attitude towards the state, and that the rulers were always responsible for the lack of patriotism of any group. He asserted that the state had to choose between mediaeval butchery of the Jews and granting them equal rights, for human rights without civil rights were an absurdity. On several occasions the House of Com-

mons voted in favor of granting the Jews equal rights, and the city of London entrusted them with high offices. But the House of Lords did not depart from the ancient fiction of the Ecclesiastical State, and it was not until the year 1856 that it granted the House of Commons the right to regulate the oath as it desired. In 1871 the universities abolished the Christian test, and in 1885 the first Jew entered the House of Lords. From the mother country the principle of the equality of the Jews was extended to the colonies.

While the Jewish minorities in all the western countries were being gradually freed from the mediaeval yoke,

**Polish Persecutions** the great masses in Eastern Europe were suffering a martyrdom which made the "century of human rights" appear to be a hollow mockery. The Poles treated them with implacable hatred and enmity. Their overweening pride could not bear the thought of granting the Jews equal rights, and even during the revolution of 1831 it opposed "the mixing of Jewish blood with the noble blood of the Poles." Despite the adoption of the Napoleonic Code the Grand-Duchy of Warsaw continued an excessively hostile policy towards the Jews, and constitutional Poland sought to place all the blame for the deep-rooted maladministration of the country upon the Jews. By means of occupational restrictions, oppressive taxes, high duties, and by hindering their efforts to obtain an education, the Poles limited and confined them and made their hard lot still more unendurable. In 1863, before the revolution, the Poles promised the Jews equal rights. The victory of the Russians relieved them of the necessity of fulfilling their promise, but even in their weakness they did not desist from harassing the Jews through

intolerance and economic boycott, in Poland as well as in Galicia.

As a result of its expansion, "Holy" Russia secured a Jewish population of many millions, who were living in the utmost misery and distress. Its policy towards the Jews, that of religious hatred and zeal for conversion, of economic envy and fiscal greed, was doomed to failure from the very beginning. The Russian government always compared only its backward Jews, never its other backward national groups, laws, and institutions, with those of Western Europe, and in the hot-bed of barbarism, bigotry, and deceit continual complaints were made against the ignorance, intolerance, and dishonesty of the Jews. "Commissions for the Investigation of the Jewish Question" were appointed almost weekly, but they never accomplished anything, because they tried to exorcise the devil with the aid of Beelzebub and proposed new exceptional laws in place of the old ones. The advice of Michail Speranski, whom Napoleon I called the only clear mind of Russia, to the effect that the Jews should be allowed to better themselves in absolute freedom and with as little interference as possible on the part of the state, was never followed, and thus there was created a problem which vexed Russia and all humanity, and which resulted only in making the lot of the Jewish masses more wretched and in "revolutionizing the intelligentsia." Ever since the time of Catherine II the wisdom of the Russian bureaucracy consisted solely in limiting the Jews' right of residence, and this despite the fact that the governors of those provinces which the Jews occupied testified to the benefits the land received because of their diligence and industry and to

**Under  
Russian  
Tyranny**





MEDAL COMMEMORATING MOSES MONTEFIORE'S ONE HUNDREDTH BIRTHDAY, 1884.



MEDAL COMMEMORATING THE PUBLICATION OF MOSES MENDELSSOHN'S "PHAEON," ABOUT 1775.

the loss which it would suffer if they were kept out. In Southern Russia, where Alexander I had founded Jewish agricultural colonies, the movement in favor of extending the rights of the Jews found its most ardent advocates. Nicholas I (1825-1855) first had the Jews banished from the plains and then driven out of the border districts. As a result of these two measures half of the Russian Jews were penniless and the city ghettos became unendurably over-crowded.

Despite the restriction of the Jews' occupational opportunities, the oppressive burden of taxation imposed upon them was increased, and the old Jewish right of self-government was abolished.

**Efforts at Conversion** Though they possessed no rights, the Jews were forced to become soldiers, and the twenty-five year period of military service appeared to be an unfailing means for converting them to Christianity. Since, however, Jewish young men of military age were too confirmed in their faith, the Czar devised the devilish cantonment system, whereby children twelve years of age and over, later even at the age of nine, were taken away from their parents and brought up in a military manner by Greek-Orthodox instructors. Since this plan did not succeed either, despite the fact that it was executed with the most brutal severity, the Czar tried to attain his goal by means of enlightenment, by founding schools and disseminating literature. In accordance with his plan his official organs made attacks upon the Jewish religion, and the Jews, suspecting, not without reason, a new attempt to convert them, resisted this sign of favor which the Czar showed them. Conditions were quite different when Alexander II extended somewhat their right of settlement, furthered the Jewish

schools and admitted Jews to Russia's higher institutes of learning. Impressed with the uprightness of the liberal Czar's purposes, the Jews willingly entered into his plans of amalgamation, but some of the best educated men were lost to Judaism.

The attention of the Jews of the Occident was directed to their coreligionists of the Orient when the

The  
Damascus  
Affair and Its  
After-Effect French consul in Damascus utilized the lie of the blood accusation for purposes of political intrigue (1841). The public opinion of

Europe, at that time still very sensitive to any violation of justice and humanity, became indignant that the French government tolerated such an insufferable proceeding. A legal investigation which demonstrated the innocence of the Jews was started by Sir Moses Montefiore (1785-1886), who devoted his long and useful life to loyal and self-sacrificing service in behalf of his persecuted coreligionists, and by Adolphe Crémieux, one of the few Frenchmen who had courage enough to oppose their government in this matter. In the course of their travels they took note of the oppressive and abject situation as well as of the cultural backwardness of their coreligionists, and exerted their noblest efforts towards improving conditions through the founding of schools and the encouraging of arts and crafts. In order to insure the school system, Crémieux founded a benevolent society in 1860, the first of its kind, embracing the Jews of all lands, the *Alliance Israelite Universelle*. The ill-chosen name of this humanitarian institution was later misused for the purpose of substantiating the slanderous charge that the Jews were trying to obtain world dominion by means of an international union. That the Jews were by no means international in their thoughts is

evidenced by the fact that after the year 1870 it was an exceptionally difficult task to keep the German and the French Jews together for the continuation of this work of culture, and that later on the English, Austrian, and German Jews founded separate relief societies out of consideration for the oriental policy of their native lands.

In Turkey, which, according to the provisions of the peace treaty of Paris (1856) was to guarantee freedom of

*Turkey and the Balkans* religious worship and civil equality to all non-Mohammedans, the Jews were granted all civil rights in accordance with the constitution of 1908. The Berlin Congress (1878) guaranteed that the Jews were to be granted full equality in the new Balkan states. All of them carried out their agreement honorably, with the exception of Rumania, which adopted Russian methods while displaying far more cunning and brutality than the Russians. The Congress of Paris had stipulated full civil equality for the Jews, but it had worded the article so ambiguously that Rumania took advantage of its obscurity. Ever since that time the guiding principle of the Rumanian policy towards the Jews has been intolerance, exclusion from all rights, and occupational restriction. Rumania demanded that the Jews perform all their duties including that of military service, while at the same time, however, declaring them to be foreigners and creating an alien law of unusual severity. In the Russo-Turkish War thousands of Rumanian Jews shed their blood for the country which had refused them the rights of a home-land. As a prerequisite for the recognition of Rumania the Berlin Congress demanded the equalization of all religions. Rumania's new constitution was in accord with this demand, but the Jews were forthwith declared "foreigners

without external protection" and as such they were allowed to become naturalized only upon personal application and by an act of legislation. Thus Rumania succeeded once more in outwitting European diplomacy, for only a very few individual Jews were naturalized.

The fundamental principles of the Constitution of the United States corresponded with the growing spirit of tolerance as evidenced by the various states <sup>Tolerance in America</sup> in the adoption of their constitutions. The only exception occurred in Maryland, where a declaration of belief in the Christian religion was required "on admission to any office of trust or profit." The Jews of Maryland presented repeated petitions to the legislature that they might be "placed upon the same footing with other good citizens," but at first all their efforts were fruitless. Only later, after the rise in material importance and communal influence of the Jews of Baltimore, the outcome of the struggle seemed more hopeful. Distinguished men active in public affairs showed keen sympathy with the full emancipation of the Jewish citizens. Furthermore Jews, conspicuous for civil and military services, were entrusted with important offices by the national government and it was not to its honor when the state disqualified the same men from holding the most insignificant offices. Nevertheless it took from 1818, when the Jews again began their endeavors, until 1826, before the act "for the relief of the Jews in Maryland" was passed and confirmed. So the last remnants of Jewish disabilities in the United States disappeared; the new states conformed immediately to the spirit of the national constitution.

The United States government protested strenuously when foreign countries, where reactionary laws against

the Jews were still in force, subjected American citizens to discrimination because of their Jewish origin. Thus

**America as the Defender of the Jews** it interfered when Swiss cantons excluded American Jews from the right of settlement (1851). It insisted that the Balkan States accord full rights to the Jews before their independence be recognized, and later warned the signatory powers of the Berlin treaty that Rumania was not loyal to her obligations. Similarly it protested when Russia refused to treat American Jews as she did other nationals; in defense of the Jew the United States even went so far as to abrogate the old commercial treaty with Russia. Even where American interests were not affected, the government intervened in the name of humanity against anti-Jewish excesses, as the Damascus blood accusations, the persecutions in Palestine and in Morocco, and the pogroms in Rumania and Russia.

The liberal spirit which predominated in the United States attracted the oppressed of all countries. After

**Immigration to America before 1880** the sufferings of the Napoleonic wars when the reaction set in, when the Jews of Germany and Austria were again persecuted and cheated of their political or even human rights, when the privilege of settling and marrying was denied them, they left in great numbers for North America. The marvelous development of the country caused the number of immigrants to increase rapidly. More than 200,000 Jews, for the most part from western Germany, from Posen, and Bohemia, settled from 1820 until 1870, between the Atlantic and the Pacific. Thus the United States received a remarkable influx of men of intelligence and energy who helped to build up the country and to develop it industrially, commercially and financially.

Many of them held distinguished positions in public life. The record of Jews holding state or communal offices was always high. The frequent employment of Jews in diplomatic posts deserves special mention. The attitude of the Jews toward the Union during the Civil War was not uniform. They belonged to both parties, fought in all ranks and boasted a total of 9 generals on both sides. It made a deep impression upon public opinion that some rabbis, as, for example, David Einhorn, exposed their lives to danger by their decided anti-slavery position. During that period the Jews organized their communal life and established that widespread system of congregational and philanthropic institutions which gained the admiration of the whole population.

A new wave of immigration set in in 1882, after the first pogrom in South Russia had taken place and a series of restrictive laws had been promulgated. Since 1882 Later Rumania's atrocities against the Jews, and the anti-Jewish economic policy of Galicia had the effect of stimulating emigration en bloc. Within thirty years over two million Jews from Eastern Europe, particularly from Russia, entered the United States looking for an asylum against religious persecution. While German immigration brought into the country, as a rule, young unmarried people, here whole families tried to escape their persecutors; while the former immigrants came in small groups at a time when large parts of America were open for colonization, now they came in masses at a period when the states were crowded, at least in the eastern sections where the bulk of the immigrants settled. On the other hand the majority of the newcomers were artisans and created quite a new class within the Jewish population, an appreciably large

labor group. The problem of sheltering and finding employment for a foreign Jewish population much larger than the already established Jewish groups was not an easy one, but a feeling of solidarity with the persecuted brethren finally overcame the many trying questions that presented themselves. With startling rapidity the Russian Jews assimilated with the spirit of America and entered American public activities. The World War saw thousands of them fighting in the United States army. Russian immigration gave an entirely different aspect to American Jewry. Gentile public opinion, first in sympathy with the victims of religious fanaticism, began to resent the influx of a large new element, and a strong agitation against free immigration, coupled with the rise of anti-Jewish feeling is palpably evident throughout the country.

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## CHAPTER X

### CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS STRUGGLES

#### I. SECULAR CULTURE

The change in the external situation of the Jews was accompanied by an earnest attempt on their part to adapt themselves to their new situations and <sup>Influence of Mendelssohn</sup> to familiarize themselves with their environment. Germany took the lead in this cultural movement, one of the most difficult of which history has record. Even Lessing's "Nathan" was confronted with the problem, "To desire to be a typical Jew in all respects is not very feasible, and to be no Jew at all is still worse." The problem was to ascertain the golden mean. Moses Mendelssohn recommended to the Jews participation in the culture of their environment, for he had in mind the enlightenment with its purely humanitarian ideal. He never ceased to advise the Jews to improve their educational system, and his admirers erected institutes with the motto, "For Culture and Humanity," for the education of boys and girls. Mendelssohn's translation of the Pentateuch and of the Psalms rendered widely-read Biblical books accessible to his coreligionists in good German while his Hebrew commentary furthered the plain, rational comprehension of the Bible and the appreciation of its classical diction and

beauty. It is true that prominent rabbis proscribed his translation of the Bible, nevertheless, in Germany these voices of fanaticism died away amid the general approval which the work received. Mendelssohn's Bible, in spite of those who decried it, became an educational work of high rank. It was read by the young, both openly and secretly and it took its place as the most effective source of power for spiritual progress, entire generations owed to it their first contact with European culture.

As time went on individual Jews were admitted to the public schools. After their naturalization they were subject to compulsory education, their institutes of learning were placed under state supervision, and there was no further hindrance in the way of their attending higher institutes of learning and universities. This produced a change in the Jewish educational system as a whole, for the rabbinic academies in Germany closed their doors within a short time and the study of the Talmud seemed to be nearly at an end. On the other hand the general culture of the Jews was improved rapidly. Although the study of the Talmud had greatly deteriorated it still connected Judaism with an ancient form of culture and preserved the activity and discipline of the mind. Under the influence of the highly developed German culture the Jewish spirit became rejuvenated and once more soared aloft in its flight. In Berlin and in Vienna Jewish "salons" became the center of the cultivated aristocracy. The poetical glory of Schiller and Goethe, and Kant's philosophy, found their most ardent heralds and interpreters in the Jews of Berlin. Only a generation after Mendelssohn the character of Jewish Berlin had been com-

Spread of Secular Culture

pletely changed. Intellectual endeavor animated the Jews, notwithstanding the fact that the state made their education compulsory but did not further it, and put difficulty in the way of their admission to all academic occupations, with the exception of medicine. "The Jews cultivate all branches of science with the greatest success, and there is practically no field of art in which they do not make masterly contributions." Thus reads the testimony which the reactionary Prussian minister of public worship and instruction gave concerning them in 1847, and the recognition which was accorded them by all expert critics is of similar import. Up to the present time no country has complained of a retrogression in the intelligence, energy and cultural contributions of the Jews; on the contrary, the Jew has been accused of an excess of intellectuality.

The compulsory limitation of the occupations of the Jews was one of the hindrances in the attainment of equal rights. As soon as Jews were permitted they devoted their full energies to handicraft and farming. For the time being it seemed as if they would master the problem, despite the fact that they were given no land, as were the emancipated peasants, and although the unfavorable laws of many states and the antipathy of the master-workmen towards Jewish apprentices made their admission into the trades unusually difficult. In the following period, in which the free play of economic forces became almost a principle, it was out of the question to dictate a choice of occupation. In an epoch when the land was being deserted it was not to be expected that the Jews, who had been living in the cities for centuries, should revert to the soil, nor when the handicrafts were threatened with ruin

**Jews in  
Commerce  
and in the  
Trades**

as the result of increasing industrialization, a class of the population which had hitherto had no connection with the various trades should adopt them in large numbers. For a long time the Jews had been at home in business and finance, and they now participated actively in financial affairs, in industry, in the wholesale trade, and in banking. It is generally recognized that the Jews performed important functions in the economic life of the times, that they created new industries, organized business branches, and gained renown as pioneers in new commercial methods. In the countries where the Jews settled in masses they are still the pillars of the trades. In Eastern Galicia, now Polish Ukraine, they form more than eighty percent of all the artisans and industrial workers, inclusive of the naphtha miners. In Rumania the number of the Jews engaged in handicrafts is four and one-half times greater than their proportion of the population, and in czarist Russia one-third of all the Jews were engaged in handicrafts and trade. When the Eastern Jews emigrated to England and America they transferred great industries to their new homes. In Galicia one-third of all the Jews are engaged in agriculture, and the Baron de Hirsch colonies in Argentina and the colonies in Southern Russia, in North America as well as in Palestine, have given evidence of the agricultural abilities of the Jews.

The civil status of the Jewish upper classes in Berlin, Vienna, and Paris was in marked contrast with their social position. They no longer possessed the strength for martyrdom and did not cherish the visionary hope for future redemption, they were inspired rather with the very practical desire for earthly prosperity, for they had been trained

in the individualism of the period of enlightenment, and recognized no responsibility to the group as a whole. They held Judaism responsible for all their sufferings, regarded the Christian world as the land for which they yearned, and looked upon their Jewish life as the sad reality. Thus for them the word "Jewish" became synonymous with lowliness, and all their energies were directed toward freeing themselves from this disgrace, toward securing "Christian rights." No government was willing to tolerate the Jews as a separate community, as a state within a state. The elimination of "Jewish nationality" was demanded by the state, and was striven for by the Jews likewise. Those factors which embodied this "Jewish nationality," that is, the Talmudic teachings, rabbinic jurisdiction, and the police supervision exercised by the community leaders, became discredited and hated. The educated classes saw in the Jewish religion only empty ceremonies and ugly forms, and adhered in a one-sided manner to Mendelssohn's doctrine that Judaism was "revealed law"—and the law was a burden to them—but overlooked what the philosopher stated concerning the unfathomable treasure of rational truths and religious teachings which are closely bound up with the law.

Many Jews who could have been an ornament to their faith, who could have been leaders of a new movement in Judaism deserted it and left it to its fate. It was Judaism's misfortune that the breaking down of its religious life was caused by the period of enlightenment, which seemingly offered only one remedy, that of rationalism, and had no appreciation for things religious. In the hearts of cultivated Jews there developed a void which gave them no support and made them susceptible

to every romantic impulse. The spread of worldly culture among them was accompanied by worldly defects, "outward polish and rich luxury," which banished the ethical pathos of the ghetto and crushed the old heartfelt fervor. At least one-tenth of all the Jews of Berlin, among them the daughters of Mendelssohn, had themselves baptized. Those like David Friedlander, who were too honest to make an untrue confession of faith, sought to become adherents of a "Christianity without dogmas" in order to clear the way for their children, but they did not meet with any response. The struggle for a uniform outlook (*Weltanschauung*) for emancipated and cultivated Jewry has lasted for more than a hundred years.

## 2. THE REFORM MOVEMENT

Even Mendelssohn had perceived in the Jewish religion "human additions and abuses which unfortunately obscure its glory." But after his death there

Israel Jacobson and the Beginning of Reform was nobody to bring about a harmonization of Judaism with the philosophy of the times.

The enlightened lacked all appreciation for Jewish teachings, and although the rabbis were men of recognized lofty morality they had no understanding of the times and of their environment, and adhered anxiously to tradition. Two problems occupied the minds of the people, the first, that of determining to what extent the wide-spread Jewish beliefs were true, the second whether or not the ceremonial law was binding. Demands for a comprehensive reform were made at the Paris Sanhedrin, and opposition broke out behind the scenes, but nothing was done to relieve the situation. Israel Jacobson (1768-1828), president of the consistory

of Cassel, a man who was not entirely free from vanity but who was wholly devoted to the cause of his faith made the first attempt to adapt religious services to the conditions and desires of the times. He introduced the sermon in German, a reform which was retained even by the adherents of tradition, and he furthermore introduced German hymns and organ accompaniment, features which even today form the shibboleth of contending parties. He also adopted the ceremony of confirmation for children. In some other states, like Denmark and Sweden, the rite was enforced by law.

David Friedlander was even more radical in his views than Jacobson. From the fact of the emancipation of

**The Hamburg Temple** the Jews he deduced the necessity of "restor-

ing complete national and religious unity," therefore, also, the giving up the Jewish doctrine of the Messiah, and Hebrew as the language for prayers. His demands, however, were not carried out. The attention of all was directed to a "modern religious service" which was first instituted in Hamburg. A large number of renowned rabbis proscribed the new "temple," as well as its prayer-book which deviated from tradition. With touching naïveté they took their stand on the ground of tradition, although the question under discussion was whether, after authority had been replaced by the right of self-determination in ordinary life, a traditional law could claim absolute validity in the religious life of the people. As a result of its remoteness from the actual world, orthodoxy of the old stamp had forfeited its right to exist.

The movement of the year 1819 brought out the question as to whether the Jews had done enough towards gaining the esteem of their fellow-citizens of other per-

suasions, whether the aesthetic ornamentation of the synagogs could produce the necessary inward change in

Attempts to  
Modernize  
Jews and  
Judaism

Jewish nature, whether the traditional conception of Judaism could hold its own with the increase in culture. The "Society for the Dissemination of Knowledge and Culture

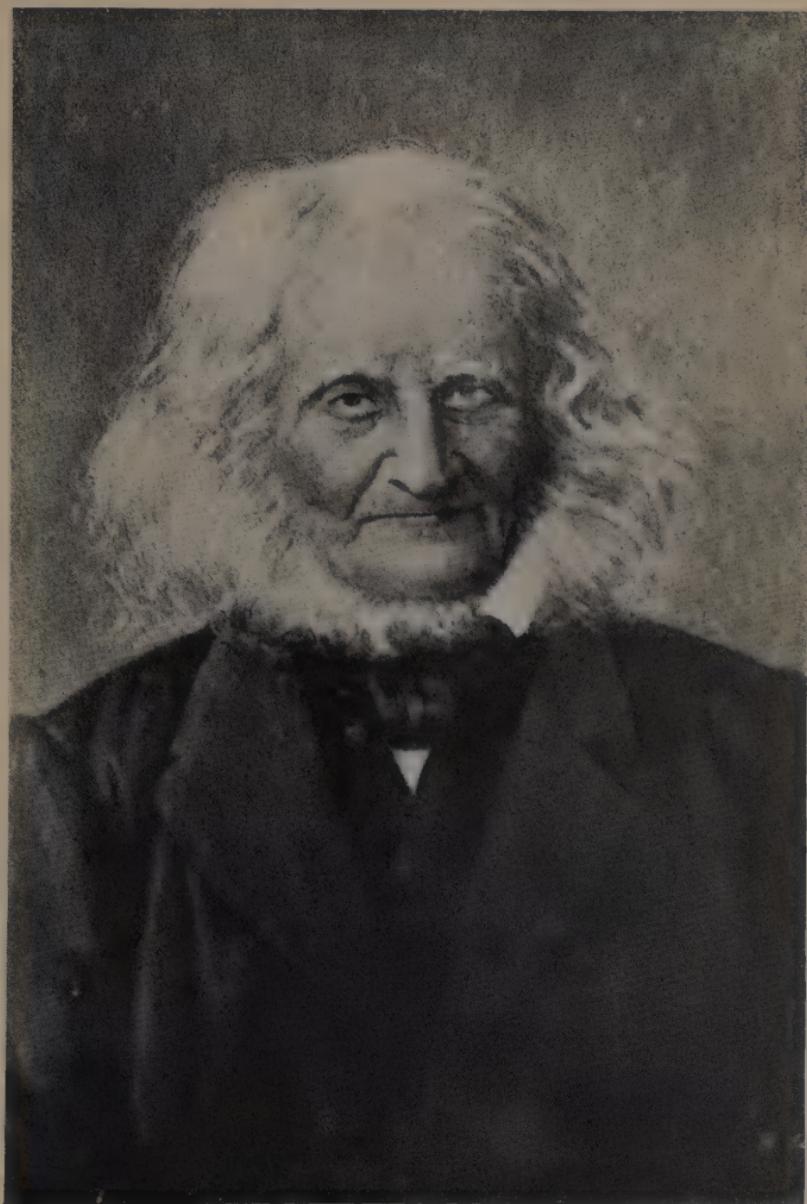
among the Jews," of which Heinrich Heine was a member, assumed the task of furthering Jewish education, of influencing the Jews' choice of occupation, of cultivating good taste, and of bringing about a "harmonization between historical Judaism and modern science." The Society failed, but despite its ignominious failure, the end of the uncertain transitional period dates from it. In its circle the expression "historical Judaism" was used again for the first time, and there developed the impulse towards studying Judaism in the spirit of scientific criticism and toward demonstrating the importance for general culture of a mutual understanding of Judaism and science.

Leopold Zunz deserves credit for having stripped the study of Judaism of its one-sidedness, of its remote dogmatism, and for having included it in the category of the sciences. "A man of words

<sup>Zunz and the</sup>  
<sup>the Science of</sup>  
<sup>Judaism</sup> and deeds, he worked and labored where others dreamed and gave up in despair." The new order worked toward a scientific investigation of Jewish history, literature and religion. It gave to Judaism a high impulse, it stimulated the self-consciousness of the Jews, it helped to improve their education, it spread enlightenment among friends and foes and assisted in the elimination of prejudices. But the expectations of Zunz were not fulfilled. The political reaction rested heavily upon the Jews. The science of Judaism remained the special

domain of the experts. It created no institutions, and only at a later period did it succeed in exercising any influence on the views of the Jewish masses. For the time being their spiritual condition and their interests remained at a low level. In obtuse sluggishness they continued their thoughtless ceremonial piety, associating it with no warmth and depth of feeling.

In this period of deep religious depression two theologians, Abraham Geiger (1810-1874) and Samson Raphael Hirsch (1808-1888) issued a call for **Geiger and Hirsch** reform—not for insignificant, isolated reforms, but for a thoroughgoing transformation. "The difficult as well as the simple, the whole as well as the part, must have sense and meaning, must elevate the spirit, must warm the heart, so that it may influence the entire life of the individual." Both men took the present as their standpoint and recognized in it a new period. Both regarded Judaism as a religion of humanity, waged war against the ceremonial law which was meaningless and had therefore become a formality, and demanded a revival of the religion by bringing its prophetic ideals to the front and by restoring the fervor and enthusiasm which they demanded. Geiger emphasized the historical development and the relativity of events, insisted upon a historical-critical study of the evolution of Judaism and the harmonization of life with the doctrine thus secured, and regarded the dispersion of the Jews as the means of carrying out their messianic mission, and the emancipation as an advance in this direction. On the other hand, Hirsch stressed "revealed Judaism" in contrast to the spirit of the times, saw in the dispersion a process of purification ordained by God, and viewed the Israelites as the bearers of the task of



LEOPOLD ZUNZ.



reestablishing communion with God by fulfilling the duties prescribed in the "Torah," that is, in the entire complicated body of biblical and rabbinical laws.

Revelation and rationalism, loyalty to the law and spiritualization—these were two platforms about which parties could form and group themselves.

**The Struggle over Reform** Neither program, however, was carried out, for the fundamental demand for reform was lost sight of in the face of separate individual reforms. One side exhausted itself in opposing the forms, the other in glorifying them, and the original broadmindedness toward differing opinions changed into fanatical seclusion and intolerance. In those years, during the course of which the Christian churches of Germany witnessed upheavals and all kinds of new movements, there was talk of a schism even in Judaism. The emancipation was, by some Christian churchmen, declared dependent upon a change in Jewish doctrine and the abolition of Rabbinical ceremonies. There were a good many Jews who were ready to pay that price. This big problem and some more new questions like those of the religious freedom of the individual, of the community, and of the rabbi, only tended to render the contrast between traditional Judaism and the adherents of reform still more acute.

In the midst of this crisis S. Stern suggested that a "German-Jewish church" be established, in which religion

**Stern and Holdheim** was to acquire a meaning for all people through the abolition of all points of separation, and in which all those religious regulations which were in contradiction to the present problems of life or which had no moral significance for present-day existence were to be done away with. The same point

of view was taken by Samuel Holdheim (1810-1860), who opposed Rabbinism by means of rabbinic dialecticism, and announced his belief in the "Mosaic religion." He rejected all those institutions which applied to the Mosaic state, and wished to retain only the "religious belief concerning the holiness of the civil state as a divine institution." For this reason he wanted the authority of religion to be granted to the law of the state. The German-Jewish or the Prussian-Jewish church did not materialize, because the state did not even grant civil equality, much less ecclesiastical equality. The new program was adopted only by the "Jewish Reform Community" in Berlin, and it was incorporated into its religious observances. With these exceptions this form of radicalism could not take root in Europe, but in America the principle met with considerable approval.

This schism was all the more dangerous for Judaism because Judaism had no scientific or religious corporate body which could subject questions of this kind to an impartial investigation. Several <sup>Rabbinical Assemblies</sup> assemblies of rabbis met for the purpose of finding a solution to the disputed problems, but only a few theologians answered the appeal, the majority of them quite young, men of boldness and daring, of an impetuous and disputatious nature, but without judgment in the realities of life. Instead of relieving the situation by discussing matters of principle, they forthwith took to debating details, and their fluctuation between radicalism and opportunism displeased the members of every party. The dignified public meetings of the rabbinic assemblies enhanced the esteem of the Jewish religion externally, but they were of no immediate significance for its internal development.

The religious idealism of the Storm and Stress period did not last very long, and after the year 1848 politics and professional activities became the center of attention. The *Weltanschauung* of the **Historical and Orthodox Judaism** Jews became almost independent of religious influence, but a strong, though not always clear religious feeling continued to exist. In the absence of official restraint and of synodal decrees, many disregarded the observance of the Sabbath and of the ceremonial law, without, however, always deducing the theoretical consequences from their course of action. Conservative tendencies developed among the communities, and the influence of the positive elements prevailed. The leader of this movement was Zacharias Frankel (1801-1875), who recognized the law of historical development, but ascribed greater value to the existing and commonly recognized institutions as well as to religious emotion. Together with Heinrich Graetz (1817-1891), the historian of the Jews, he founded a school which succeeded in gaining recognition for the standpoint of historic reform. Even this moderate movement had to carry on a constant struggle against "those who remained loyal to the traditional law," a group which was organized after 1870 under the leadership of Israel Hildesheimer and which, accorded modern culture due recognition, but wished none the less to keep the Jewish religious law unchanged. At that time religious feeling had reached its lowest ebb. Materialism was making inroads upon it, and the Jews sacrificed many victims to that idol as they did to every form of folly which happened to be in vogue.

In no other country were religious struggles as violent and as intense as in Germany, even though the

contradiction between life and doctrine was manifest everywhere. In the countries of the west the reforms of

Reform in  
Western  
Europe

Jacobson were carried out. At the beginning of the nineteenth century England witnessed the baptism of a great number of Portuguese families, but still no serious religious movement was forthcoming. Some reforms, after the German pattern, were adopted by a few synagogues, but Jewry as a whole, organized by an act of Parliament, remained stagnant on the basis of tradition, even though most individuals had long since given up this standpoint. In France also a peace of stagnation prevailed under the protection of the consistorial constitution. Only at the beginning of the Twentieth Century smaller groups in both countries became more active in asking for a modern religious evolution, and they had to experience the antagonism of the official authorities. Conditions were altogether different in America, the great colonial land. Here the communities formed themselves anew and possessed full freedom to conduct and arrange their religious institutions as they pleased.

In eastern Europe cultural progress was attained more slowly, and only after violent struggles. Here

Slow Progress  
in Eastern  
Europe

orthodoxy was supported by the great masses who still remained in deepest ignorance, and here Hasidism had engendered fanatical intolerance. Those who favored the most insignificant innovations or practiced them privately endangered their lives, and all those who were devoted to culture and enlightenment suffered a severe martyrdom. But light finally breaks through even the thickest darkness and the cultural ambitions of the Jewish youth broke down all resistance. Then, of course, a contradiction

occurred between culture and tradition, and the majority of the enlightened grew completely indifferent towards religion. The lack of an evolutionary movement caused Judaism heavy losses. In Hungary individual public schools furthered the cause of general education, but despite the insistence of the communities the religious institutions remained unchanged. The Revolution of 1848 gave the radical element a temporary victory, but only the adherents of moderate progress based on the science of Judaism could gain lasting influence among the congregations. The government attempted to rearrange community affairs by the convocation of a Jewish congress, but the orthodox declared that the decrees of this congress constituted a restraint of conscience, and received permission to organize themselves as a "special denomination." Hence the Jews of Hungary are organized into three different Jewish denominations. Their orthodoxy stamped the religious groups with the character of rival political organizations, and rendered the differences between them in all countries more acute.

In Russia the struggle for general culture led to the revival of the Hebrew language. Mendelssohn and his disciples were the first to devote themselves to the improvement and spread of the Hebrew language and to further its knowledge by means of books, periodicals, translations, and poetry. Next to Berlin, where the movement quickly lost force, Vienna and Prague were its most prominent centers and at the same time the points from which it spread to the east. Here all the elements which were friendly towards culture (Maskilim) joined the movement. Mendelssohn and his endeavors found enthusiastic admirers among them, and the cultivation of Hebrew was accompanied

**The Haskalah Movement**

at the same time by the adoption of German culture which then dominated the whole of Eastern Europe. Although the Haskalah (enlightenment) was bitterly opposed by the orthodox and the Hasidim and persecuted as a form of apostasy, nevertheless the numbers of its adherents increased steadily. Its cause had only friends, however, and no leaders or organizers. "In accordance with the system of Mendelssohn" Hyman Hurwitz opened the first Jewish secular school of Russia at Uman in the year 1822. This was followed by many other similar schools especially in southern Russia.

Isaac Baer Levinsohn "the Mendelssohn of Russia," proved by means of religious sources the necessity for better education and for increased participation in handicrafts and agriculture. He became the leader of the new generation, but he was bitterly opposed by the masses and the official teachers. When the Russian government established Jewish schools the Maskilim found their opportunity, but they had no large sphere of action because under Alexander II the youth began to abandon Hebrew and cultivate the Russian tongue. "The Society for the Spread of Culture among the Jews" (1863) first impelled the masses to find the proper connection between the old and the new. The cultural ambitions of the Jewish youths of Russia were no less strong than the difficulty of satisfying them. The Hebrew language provided a means for the acquisition of European education and culture, and thus there arose a very important and significant neo-Hebraic literature, with well-known writers and poets, and a large and grateful circle of readers. Hebrew became the language of the daily life of the people, the most important means of attaining cul-

**Rise of  
Modern  
Hebrew**

ture, and the most significant counterpoise to Hasidism. The neo-Hebraic literature rendered the minds of the people susceptible to general culture and to modern ideas weighed and elaborated by Jewish learning. In religious questions it represented a radical tendency hostile to tradition, but the attraction which it exercised was so irresistible that even the conservative romantic party employed it for the purpose of announcing the value of the old tradition in new ways. Only the Hasidim adhered firmly to the Yiddish language. They had no contact whatsoever with the times, and their stubborn adherence to this principle seemed to condemn them to destruction.

All the different elements in the cultural and religious controversy among the Jews became manifest when the great Jewish groups blended in one stream in the melting pot, America. It is a proof of their deep religious feeling that wherever these new settlers came together in large numbers they founded congregations. It is a testimony to their idealistic enthusiasm and their willing spirit of sacrifice that they at once created all kinds of religious and philanthropic institutions. Through communication with Hamburg the Reform Movement became known in the United States. As early as 1824 the Reformed Society of Israelites was founded in Charleston, South Carolina. With remarkable daring this Society undertook to reform Jewish thought and religious worship. This first attempt was frustrated through lack of leadership. Even later on, as more and more men immigrated who had taken some part in the struggle for Reform in Germany and were imbued with its principles there was still no unified aim, although certain sporadic reforms

Beginning  
of Reform  
Judaism  
in America

were brought about. The idea of the prophetic and the messianic mission of Judaism was in harmony with the predominating ideal of the United States and therefore it easily won dominion over the Jewish congregations.

Isaac M. Wise, (1819-1900), had the most significant influence upon the development of Judaism in the United

**Influence of Isaac Mayer Wise** States; he beheld in this country the germ of an important new Jewish solidarity. He became the avowed protagonist of an American Judaism. "He would have the universal and eternal content of Judaism find expression in a form and spirit consistently and avowedly American." He recognized that the new problems which were presenting themselves because of constant immigration and colonization could only be met by a strong will, a central purpose. He used every method of publicity to bring about a union of the Jews in the United States. His gift of organization was as marked as his struggle towards overcoming rampant individualism. After repeated unsuccessful efforts, he achieved his goal in 1873, namely the founding of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, an organization now having a membership of hundreds of reform congregations. These congregations have brought about a unified reform in establishing a liberal religious service and a system of progressive religious instruction. In order to make American Judaism independent of the chance immigration of religious leaders and to assure it teachers of scientific training and American education, he founded in 1875 the Hebrew Union College, that home of Jewish learning, whose graduates are scattered throughout the whole country directing the religious, educational, and social life of their congregations. Also, in 1889, he founded

the Central Conference of American Rabbis, whose purpose was declared to be, "to bring together the Jewish scholars in America, to advance Jewish learning, and to support all efforts toward the spread of Judaism." With the rapid growth of the number of congregations and their increase in membership these organizations broadened out; in harmony with a favorable public opinion they assumed the character of a decided universalism with predominantly radical reform tendencies which were constantly directed toward obliterating the oriental origin of Judaism and orientating it according to the views and customs of the west.

This radical trend which appeared so strongly in the Declaration of Principles of the Pittsburg Conference (Nov. 1885), called forth a conservative re-

**Conservative Reaction** action which was substantially strengthened

by the heavy Russian immigration. In contrast to the settlers at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the new immigrants were not inclined to give up their Jewish characteristics and traditions. On the contrary, although they tried to adapt themselves as far as possible to American influences, they made every effort to maintain traditional Jewish ritual and ceremonial along with the eternal truths of Judaism. Conservative tendencies centered in the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, which was founded in 1886 under the leadership of Sabato Morais and Alexander Kohut, and which was fortunate in securing later on a gifted and inspiring leader in Solomon Schechter (1901-1915). The conservative congregations, also, built up a powerful organization in the United Synagogue of America. They felt it their peculiar task to establish such religious institutions in the communities as would reflect the

traditions of Judaism, and at the same time would meet the needs of the newer immigration. Their rabbis have also organized themselves into a society. Finally, the extremely orthodox groups followed the trend toward organization and formed a Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations which is also gaining in influence, and which is training its recruits in the Yeshibah.

Although the various groups were more sharply opposed in the United States than in other countries,

**Cultural Cooperation** the democratic point of view and the political education of the country caused the controversy to be conducted with more fairness than in Europe, so that no schism resulted. For this reason it was possible for the opposing groups to work together and to pursue a common goal. In expanding American Jewry which took in heterogeneous elements of various origins, it was necessary to provide extensively for education in the language of the country. Ever since 1888 the Jewish Publication Society of America, in which all groups work together, has tried to disseminate worthwhile literature concerning Jews and Judaism, either written in English or translated from other languages, and has established itself as an "educational factor of the highest value in American Jewry." It has been of especial service in the publication of a new translation of the Bible, one which satisfies the demands of modern knowledge and the exigencies of the English language.

The cooperation of all the religious and literary groups in American Jewry has made possible the publication of a monumental work, the Jewish Encyclopedia. This work, begun at the turn of the century, offers a comprehensive picture of present day Jewish life and of

a past extending over several thousands of years. Because of its rich content and attractive form the Jewish Encyclopedia has become a reference book for Jews and non-Jews throughout the world.

The lofty Jewish feeling of responsibility expressed itself not only in the fact that immigrants were afforded

**Work of Relief** refuge, educational and industrial opportunities, but also in the fact that in time of dire catastrophe, such as overtook the Jews of Europe during the war and in the post-war period, relief measures were organized on a large scale. Thus a helpful activity developed that was significant from a philanthropic as well as a cultural point of view.

The decrease in immigration made it possible for American Judaism to consolidate itself and especially

**Religious and Educational Progress** to develop its religious and educational organizations. The Temple Center movement is a new and wide-spread means of attaching the young people to Judaism. New institutes of learning are at work developing teachers and social workers, training them according to the best scientific methods. The Jewish Institute of Religion was established in 1922 as a new home of Jewish scholarship. In the field of education and child welfare particularly there has been a gratifying cooperation among organizations belonging to widely differing groups. The realization of a regrettable circumstance, namely, that a considerable number of the Jews of the United States are not affiliated with religious organizations, has led to a united effort to ameliorate this condition.

### 3. ANTI-SEMITISM

The nineteenth century, remarkable for its cosmopolitan tendencies and for its longing for social justice **Nationalism** unfortunately could not come to an end without a reversion to mediaeval ideas of religious and social hatred. A rigorous nationalism built on the basis of a scientific racial theory took possession of all nations. No land remained immune from this malady, and even in the United States, the land that was most loyal to the noblest traditions of freedom and brotherly love, it found a fertile soil. After 1870 when Judaism hoped to enjoy a period of peaceful development and to recover gradually from "the scars of many centuries of Christian tyranny" a new destructive storm unexpectedly broke out. This storm still demands its victims. Who would make so bold as to say that its climactic point has yet been passed!

As in the Middle Ages, the Jew became the scapegoat; he was charged with all failures and reactions in public life. The Catholic Church, checked by the spirit of progress predominating throughout the world, passed along new catch-words; its various organs opened a drum-fire against the Jews as the instigators of every evil. Anti-Semitism as an organization and a political weapon, however, first made its appearance in Germany when Bismarck returned to the reactionary tendencies of his early career.

All the economic, political, and religious troubles of the hardly consolidated Empire were charged to the small group of Jews. "Even in the circles of highest culture," writes Heinrich von Treitschke, "among men who would reject any idea of religious intolerance with

Its Anti-  
Semitic  
Results

horror, one single cry is heard, 'The Jews are our misfortune.' " This attitude was ably supported by the

**Character-  
istics of the  
Movement** Christian-Socialist movement inaugurated by the shrewd court chaplain Adolph Stoecker,

while the conservative party sponsored it for the purpose of breaking down the supremacy of Liberalism. Jew-baiting is an old and tested means of quieting political children, of diverting their attention from the actual defects and wrongs of the community and from its deeper problems. Very fittingly has anti-Semitism been called "the Socialism of the stupid." The reputed evils which the sudden rise of many Jews brought about, were not cured by means of anti-Semitism, but rendered considerably worse. Above all, Jews could not stand the life in smaller towns; they were compelled to move to large cities and were driven from many occupations, and confined to fewer callings.

Various motives were apparent in anti-Semitism, religious, racial, and national hatred, economic envy, social narrow-mindedness, and political reaction. The movement was never very particular about the integrity of its leaders and about the methods they employed; generalization, exaggeration, and misrepresentation were always its most powerful weapons. It sought repeatedly to arouse the popular passions to the exercise of actual violence. That grievous excesses never occurred, is due to the firmness of the Prussian police, to the refusal of the Labor Party to participate in the one-sided battle against "Jewish capital" and to the clerical party, which, despite its dogmatic opposition to Judaism, repulsed every attack against legal equality and fought every encroachment upon freedom of conscience. Among the means utilized to incite the masses, attacks concerning

the inferiority of the Jewish moral code as well as false excerpts from the Talmud, Shulhan 'Aruk and other rabbinical works played an important part, while even the blood accusation tale was revived. In earnest moral indignation the famous orthodox theologian, Franz Delitzsch, revealed the "Vision of the anti-Semitic Prophets" and proclaimed to them his "Check-mate of the False Blood Accusers." Scientific refutations, however, could not prevent the exploitation of this spurious material by demagogic agitators and the Jews had to be defended from the accusation of being "criminals by religious command." A new item in the history of Jewish persecutions was the movement against the Jewish method of slaughtering animals, a method prohibited in many places, as, for example, in free Switzerland, despite the fact that the most renowned experts testified that the alleged cruelty to the animals was only a fiction.

Even though the anti-Semitism of the mob failed because of its repulsiveness, racial and cultural anti-

**Racial and Cultural Anti-Semitism** Semitism met with great success. Hardly any branch of science was free from anti-Jewish prejudices. Luminaries of science at the German universities brought up many generations of academic youths in this disgusting spirit and they immediately poisoned the minds of the masses and infected all the strata of society with their hatred. Social as well as economic discriminations against the Jews resulted, but the reaction which took place in the political life was even more perceptible. Although the governments professed adherence to the constitution, actually, by means of "administrative fraud," as Theodor Mommsen termed it, they tried to exclude Jews from

the possibility of holding state offices, refused to allow them to advance into leading positions, and kept them from military and naval careers. Whereas honorable and capable Jews received no favor, renegades had an easy time of it. The life of the Jews was embittered by means of insults and humiliations of all kinds, the last of which, the ignominious "Jewish census" during the World War, has left a feeling of deep bitterness and resentment in its train. It was only to be expected that many of those who were rejected by the state and by society should join radical political parties, and in turn should be denounced as enemies of the country.

When the anti-Semitic storm broke out it was as though the Jews had awakened from a bad dream. They had devoted themselves in unselfish love to the fatherland and to German culture, and hardly understood how they could be rejected as aliens. Leading men of the Christian faith protested against the "Disgrace of the Century." In 1891, under the leadership of prominent authors, scientists and statesmen, there arose a "Society for the Prevention of Antisemitism," which adopted as its task the enlightening of misled public opinion. The Jews likewise gradually recovered from their torpor and devoted themselves to the duty of defending the honor of their name and of their tradition. As the danger increased their power increased. The Jewish students were the first to set the example of self-defense. The "Central Verein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens" (Central Association of German Citizens of the Jewish Faith) was established in 1893 for purposes of defense and of educating the Jews in the art of self-protection. The appearance of this resolute organization

**Effect of the Movement upon the Jewish Spirit**

greatly strengthened the moral powers of German Jewry and its desire for self-preservation. Gradually, even among the lukewarm and the indifferent, sympathy for Jewish questions and interest in the support of the religion of their fathers were aroused. Communal life was strengthened, and new associations arose for the cultivation of Jewish traditions, for social service, and for the discussion of important Jewish questions. As a result the German Jews developed self-consciousness and inner resoluteness to such an extent that they voluntarily provided themselves with the organization they lacked. The "Union of German Jews" in 1904 undertook to represent Judaism in all its general affairs and to influence state legislation and administration for the purpose of securing religious and civil equality. Religious feeling also became more intense with the ushering in of the new century. Religious organizations worked with more energy and the extremists of both sides gained the upper hand. As a small minority in the midst of a hostile environment, as representatives of a world view which is not modern, crowded together in large cities which render all the conditions of existence extremely difficult, which smooth out all differences and hasten the process of disintegration, the German Jews are exposed to attacks from all sides. They continually suffer great losses as the result of baptism and inter-marriage, of celibacy and the declining birth-rate. And yet on the whole their strength and vitality have increased in their struggle for existence.

German anti-Semitism spread at once to the neighboring countries. In Austria-Hungary it resulted from the same causes and made its appearance in the same form, but as a result of the nationalistic struggles it assumed a

**The Spread of Anti-Semitism** much more acute character. The fact that the Jews supported the two dominant nationalities, the Germans in Austria and the Magyars in Hungary, was of no advantage to them with these groups and it compromised them to a considerable extent with the oppressed nationalities. Even France, the home of freedom of conscience, witnessed anti-Semitism in its crudest form, from the cry concerning "the Judaizing of the land" to the false blood accusation. It is true that in France Nationalism played an active part in its foreign policy, but all the reactionary elements eagerly occupied themselves with anti-Semitism—how successfully is demonstrated by the condemnation of Captain Dreyfus, one of the greatest judicial crimes of all times. In the colonies hatred of the Jews was celebrated by violent orgies. In Algiers, where the Jews have possessed equal rights ever since the year 1870, more than one actual pogrom occurred, and in Tunis and Morocco Jewish blood was shed through the fault of French officials.

**Persecutions in Rumania** Western anti-Semitism, it is true, embittered the lives of the Jews to a great extent, but their sufferings were negligible when compared with the martyrdom of their Eastern coreligionists. In Rumania, just as formerly, the Jews were exposed to the severest oppression, for their cultural and economic annihilation was the goal of their enemies. Occupation after occupation was nationalized, with the result that the Jews could not engage in them and thus, not only the Jewish trader suffered loss, but also the Jewish artisan and laborer were deprived of their sustenance. The government took advantage of the peasants' rebellion in the year 1907 to expel the Jews from the

rural districts. It even drove the Jewish children from the public schools, and under various pretexts attacked and closed the subsidiary Jewish schools. But when the government was in need of credit it understood how to deceive the public opinion of the west with assurances of justice and impartiality, although in actuality it never dreamed of giving up its policy of extermination.

The policy of Russia towards the Jews scornfully defied all concepts of humanity, and the fiendish punishments described in Dante's *In Russia* *Inferno* were nothing compared with the tortures to which the despots and officials of Russia subjected the Jews. The goal of the government of Alexander III was Autocracy, Orthodoxy, and Panslavism, and whoever resisted these was brutally oppressed. Pobjedonoszew, the czar's counsellor, worked out this philanthropic and humanitarian formula for the redemption of the Jews—one-third should be baptized, one-third murdered, and one-third expelled. Two measures, consisting of exceptional laws and of pogroms, both organized by the government, characterized this policy. The bloody persecutions in Southern Russia and in Poland in 1881 were followed by the "temporary May laws," which remained in force until 1917, and which spelled the economic ruin of the great Jewish masses, and drove them from the rural districts and condemned them to a dreary existence in the cities. All of this resulted in great injury to the Russian peasants, who, according to official reports and anti-Semitic admissions, became the victims of Russian exploiters.

The few concessions which had been granted by Alexander II were little by little eliminated. The right of residence was taken away, first from the laborers, and

then from the artisans. The advancement of Jews in the army was forbidden, and they were prohibited from holding communal offices. But the heaviest blow was the provision that only a fixed percentage could be admitted into the schools and universities, because this signified the end of their cultural ambitions. The officials saw to it that all the laws were executed with ruthless cruelty, for they regarded the Jews as welcome objects of derision and exploitation. The result of this oppression was that the Jewish youths joined the ranks of those who were struggling for the downfall of the hated Muscovite government, whereupon the nationalists exacted a terrible revenge. Nicholas II (1894-1917), the beginning of whose reign aroused the hope for a more humane government, was strengthened by his panslavistic orthodox surroundings in his prejudice that Jews, primarily, were the leaders of the revolutionary movement. This fact explains the inhuman crimes with which the Czar and his government stained themselves. The authorities organized and assisted "The Black Hundred," a group which they directed in the instigation of pogroms. The revolution of 1905 was to be smothered in the blood of the Jews. The reaction which followed it culminated in the founding of the "Union of True Russians," the embodiment of the principle of the most brutal force. Even during the World War, when hundreds of thousands of Jews shed their blood for their adopted country, we hear of many instances of ruthless enforcement of exceptional laws and of fiendish cruelties on the part of the Czar's army and government. The revolution of 1917 abolished all disabilities, and now the liberated Russian peoples must show whether the severe persecution of the Jews was the work of the autocracy, or whether

it is inherent in the nature of the Russians themselves.

Even Jewish history, replete as it is with records of blood and tears, knows of no martyrdom to compare

**Results of Russian Persecution** with that of the Russian Jews during the last few decades. It was only natural that

sympathy and brotherly love should have been aroused everywhere on behalf of these unfortunates, and that active material and cultural relief should have been given. Well directed organizations placed their resources at the disposal of the stricken Jews. Baron Moritz Hirsch conceived the grandiose scheme of a wholesale emigration of the Russian Jews, and spent almost two hundred million francs for the establishment of a Jewish settlement in Argentina. A great stream of immigrants poured into England and America, but in both lands a nationalistic movement strove to hinder immigration and to limit the right of refuge.

#### 4. ZIONISM

Under the impress of the terrible pogroms the Russian Jews awoke from their dream of a possible fusion with Russianism and bethought themselves again of their Jewish tradition. Some declared that Palestine was the only worthy goal for immigration, and began to found colonies there even at the greatest sacrifices. Perez Smolenskin (1842-1885) paved the way for the spiritual revolution. He replaced rationalistic Haskalah with romantic Nationalism, and converted Hebrew from a cultural medium into a national language. A rich literary and pedagogic movement developed on a nationalistic basis and changed entirely the psychology of the Russian Jew. Even the lower

**Jewish Nationalism**

strata which adhered to the Yiddish tongue were aroused to the development of their language and of their literature under the influence of nationalism, and "Yiddish" culture, as the emigrants designated it, has experienced an important evolution during the last few decades. Nationalism provided the desperate victims of the Czar's government with a precious goal, and it inspired the Russian Jews with a spirit of self-confidence. The wave of democracy which swept over the world stirred up the masses and implanted within the oppressed Jewish settlers the desire for freedom from all forms of guardianship and for self-determination.

Theodor Herzl (1860-1904) pointed out a remedy for the deplorable condition of the Jews, for the danger

**Zionism and Its Early Opponents** of amalgamation in the west and of annihilation in the east, in a "Jewish state," and he

demanded for the Jewish people a neutral independent state safe-guarded by an international guarantee. He wished Palestine to be the basis for a natural development of the Jewish people and to be the means of freeing the nations from the Jewish question which followed the Jews everywhere, just like their shadow. "Zionism" became once more an all-inclusive solution of the Jewish problem and it aroused great enthusiasm, especially among the young men of the eastern countries. Nevertheless, all the leading men and organizations of Judaism were at first opposed to Zionism, since the idea contradicted the spirit of the century which had fought for the abolition of hatred toward the Jews and for their naturalization, and which had opposed the claim that the Jews were foreigners and that they formed a separate people. The opposition was expressed most strikingly at the Sixteenth Council of the Union of American

Hebrew Congregations, at Richmond in 1898, which declared that "America is our Zion." The belief in Zionism was no less contradictory of the orthodox hope in a personal Messiah than of the abstract Messianic concept of Reform Judaism, with the result that the opposing religious groups joined hands for the purpose of combating Zionism.

Herzl undoubtedly deserves credit for having converted the Jewish question from a subject of philanthropy into a political problem, for having presented it for free and open discussion, for having stimulated among the widest circles the love for the country and the language of our forefathers. Zionism fostered within the Jewish youth the striving towards a corporal and spiritual revival, strengthened Judaism's centripetal forces, aroused Jewish energies, and exercised an influence even over the groups which opposed it. Among western Jews Zionism created an understanding of the situation and of the mentality of the eastern Jews and united Jews of the most divergent political and religious tendencies on a common ground. And yet, at the same time, it led to many dangers. Sprung from the struggle against assimilation, Zionism itself fell prey to another kind of assimilation, namely, Realpolitik, the fad of the day, and it transferred the idea of nationalism in its extreme form to a "nation" without language and without country. In the minds of some the emphasis on nationalism seemed to justify indifference, and even hostility toward the Jewish religion, and induced them to underestimate the significance of Judaism's religious struggle for existence throughout the centuries.

**Strength and  
Weakness  
of Zionism**

The conflict became all the more severe as the possi-

bility of realizing Herzl's plan grew more remote. The First Congress at Basel, in the year 1897, was forced to

**The Evolution of Zionism** limit the Jewish state to a home-land guaranteed publicly and legally, but recognition could not be obtained even for this. The "Old-New Land" became a fairy tale. The Russian masses, who were struggling for redemption, resolutely opposed a Jewish home-land in some English colony. Thus "practical" Zionism arose and attempted to penetrate into the land of the fathers by means of organization and cultivation. Considerable influence was gained by the "cultural Zionism" of Ahad Haam (Asher Ginzberg), who strove for a spiritual instead of a mere national Zion, and who maintained that the creation of a spiritual center in Palestine must take precedence over the attempt to reestablish Palestine as a Jewish state.

In new Turkey political Zionism could count on no response, and its program appeared to have failed when

the World War caused an unexpected change.

**The Balfour Declaration** In the fourth year of the War, on November 2, 1917, England issued the Balfour declaration which stated that "His Majesty's Government views with favor the establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country." The Allies endorsed this promise and after Palestine had been conquered and administered by the British army they agreed to make the Balfour declaration

a part of the peace treaty with Turkey. The Jewish masses greeted this event with loud cheers, and were all the more enthusiastic when Sir Herbert Samuel, M. P., a devoted Jew, was appointed High Commissioner of the British Zone of Palestine (1920-1925). The prospects of establishing there a National Home for the Jewish people seemed to be very favorable.

But once more the promised land was not easy to reach. The Arabs started a violent agitation originating

**Progress of Jewish Settlement in Palestine** from a nationalistic point of view, but strengthened by religious fanaticism and supported not only by all enemies of the Jews but also by the governments which were antagonistic to the English oriental policy. Repeated anti-Jewish riots and a restriction of immigration were the effects of this propaganda. Only after long deliberations and various attenuations was the British project of the "Mandate" granted by the League of Nations July 24, 1922.

**After-War Prejudice** If anything results clearly from a study of the events of the World War and post-war times, it is, beyond doubt, the imperative and pressing necessity of finding shelter for the Jewish masses and of establishing an asylum where they will not be outlaws. Anti-Jewish sentiment has arisen again to an unbelievable extent and to an undreamed intensity. The feeling of solidarity, which existed among all citizens during the War, soon dissolved. The loyalty of the Jews, their sacrifices and their losses, were at once forgotten. The Jews were again charged with every evil in the world, with all war corruption and with the humiliation of the defeated nations as well as of the triumphant victors. According to the full vigor of martial law,



SIR HERBERT SAMUEL.



expiation was demanded of them. Bolshevism, the plague of the after-war period, perverted the minds of the people. The fact that a few Jews were among the leading Bolsheviks sufficed for the preaching of a new crusade against all the Jews and their alleged Bolshevikistic world conspiracy. There has scarcely been a time when lies were invented so shamelessly, and when fairy tales were believed so readily as in recent years. Just as the world today is ashamed of the persecution of witches, so will it be considered a stigma on western civilization that the people of the twentieth century discussed seriously and believed in the forgery called "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion." The anti-Semites of the several nations vied with one another in an ignoble competition of prejudice and cruelty.

Foremost in the anti-Jewish propaganda were the Russian and German monarchists who needed a scapegoat to clear themselves of the charge of having ruined their countries. Unfortunately, they succeeded in poisoning the public mind in Germany and in Austria, and even in England and America. Other countries witnessed bloody excesses under Bolshevikistic rule. Hungary was subjected to the White Terror, which emulated Alba's tyranny in the Netherlands. The Ukraine, where during the World War the Jewish population was largely increased by refugees from Poland and Lithuania, now became the scene of war between the Bolshevikistic and the Czaristic leaders. Despite the fact that the Czarists fought in the name and with the support of western democracy, their armies took part in the most horrible pogroms against the Jews, because the Jews were falsely identified with Bolshevism. When, however, the Bolsheviks came into

Its  
Widespread  
Influence

power, they renewed the massacre on the flimsy excuse that the Jews had helped their foe. The butchering of Chmielnicki's era was repeated, but its proportion and effects were even more disastrous. Today the Jewish congregations in Southern Russia are ruined. Their culture is destroyed; they represent hosts of mutilated and starving people, myriads of helpless orphans. Those, who were able, tried to escape from the land of terror; but all European countries and the United States of America objected to the immigration of the unhappy victims of barbaric atrocities. Even those Jewish inhabitants of Russia, Poland and Galicia, who were compelled to leave their homes because of the War, were looked at askance after the new distribution of the Austrian and Russian territories, and were treated without any regard for their sufferings.

Bearing in mind the old experiences, Jewish delegations aimed to have the Jewish Minority Rights embodied in the Versailles and the Trianon Peace Treaties. Poland lost no opportunity of making the Jewish position unendurable. Although her democratic constitution had granted full rights to Jewish citizens, yet a pitiless agitation is still rousing the popular passions against the Jews. Boycott and the "Numerus Clausus" are the instruments for the execution thereof. Roumania, also a Nationalistic country, considers it no crime to outrage the Jews. The same attitude prevails also throughout the Balkan States, with the exception of Czecho-Slovakia. Even Lithuania, which has granted the Jews national autonomy, seems to consider hostility to them a testimony to its civilization. And thus the Jew asks the same old question, "Whither?" A lamentable reactionary spirit

seems to possess the world. No wonder that, persecuted, many Jews turned to Palestine as their only hope. However dreary the outlook, Israel cannot lose hope. Israel should never forget the prophetic utterance of Isaiah, "In the future Jacob shall take root; Israel shall bud and blossom, and fill the face of the earth with fruit."

While the prosperity of the country may not have made sufficient progress to justify the high expectations of the numerous idealists who were ready to devote their lives to the restoration of the land of Israel; yet the economic opportunities together with the efficient and cultural support of Palestine under the direction of a probable World Jewish Agency practically guarantees the prosperity of the reconstructed Holy Land. The Hebrew University, recently dedicated, is destined to become a powerful factor in, and an incentive to the spiritual and cultural rehabilitation of Palestine and gives assurance of a Jewish Educational Renaissance.

The upbuilding of Palestine presents to world Jewry a gigantically ideal task. It does not constitute, how-

**The Problem** ever, a solution of the Jewish problem, as Theodor Herzl expected it would. Even though the country is under the sovereignty of the League of Nations, it will none the less be subjected to the vicissitudes of the shifting colonial policies of the great European powers. Palestine, even according to the most optimistic estimates, will be in a position to offer a home to one-third of the Jews, and even then not before many years have passed. For this reason the future of the Jews lies in the countries in which they are now dwelling and where they are performing all the duties and enjoying all the rights of citizenship. The concluding words of Moses Mendelssohn's "Jeru-

salem" are applicable even now, under the changed conditions of the present day. "No wiser counsel than the following can be given to the house of Jacob. Conform to the customs and the constitution of the land in which you dwell, but in addition, hold firmly to the religion of your fathers. Bear both burdens to the best of your ability."

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## INDEX



## INDEX

Abarbanel, Isaac, 86, 124.  
Abba Areka, 22.  
Aboab, Isaac, 129  
Academies, 22, 25  
Acosta, Uriel, 149  
Agriculture, Jews in, 144, 146, 193  
Ahad Haam, 221  
Akiba, 6, 10, 12, 33, 34  
Akiba, Mishnah of Rabbi, 34  
Alexandria, Destruction of the Basilica, 10  
Alliance Israelite Universelle, 184  
Alsace, Jews in, 165, 166  
America, Conservative Reaction in, 207, 208  
America, Discovery of, 128 129  
America, Immigration to, 187, 188, 189  
American Revolution and the Jews, 132  
Amoraim (Interpreters), 37, 39  
Anan ben David, 50  
Anti-Jewish Legislation, Under the Romans, 15  
Anti-Semitism, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 222, 223  
Anti-Semitism, Teutonic, 171  
Antoninus Pius, Condition of the Jews, 13  
Aquila, Translator of the Bible into Greek, 34  
Aquinas, Thomas, 67  
Arba Turim, 114, 151, 152  
Ashkenasi, Solomon, 124  
Ashkenazim, 132  
Asher ben Jechiel, 114  
Austria and the Jews, 175, 176  
Azariah dei Rossi, 149  
"Ba-al Shem Tob", 156  
Babylonia, Conditions in the Diaspora, 20  
Babylonia, Economic Status of the Jews, 20, 21  
Babylonia, Political Status of the Jews, 21  
Babylonian Jews, Relations with Palestine, 21, 22, 24  
Babylonian Jews, Relations with Persia, 24, 25  
Babylonian Schools, 38  
Balfour Declaration, The, 221  
Balkan States and the Jews, 185  
Baraita (Excluded Mishnah), 36  
Bar Kokba, 10, 11, 13  
Beilis Trial, 63  
Belgium, Conditions in, 178  
Benjamin of Tudela, 93  
Berlin Congress, 185  
Bernardino da Feltre, 66

Bible, 52, 54, 57, 112, 154, 191  
 Bible, Aramaic Translations (Targumim), 53, 54  
 Bible Commentators, 112, 113, 190  
 Biblical Criticism, 58, 116, 149  
 "The Black Hundred", 217  
 Blood Libel, 104, 105, 106, 155, 184  
 Boerne, Ludwig, 171  
 Bohemia, Jews in, 134  
 Bolshevism and the Jews, 223, 224  
*Book of the Pious*, 93, 117  
 Caro, Joseph, 151  
*Carta Judaeorum Angliae et Normanniae*, 79  
 Central Conference of American Rabbis, 207  
 Central-Verein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens, 213  
 Charlemagne and the Jews, 70, 94, 112  
 Chazars, Conversion of, 51  
 Chazars, Kingdom of, 52, 94  
 Chmielnicki Massacres, 138  
 Christianity, Early Period, 5  
 Christianity, Judaeo-Christianity, 6  
 Christianity, Triumphant under Constantine, 14  
 Church and the Jews, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 71, 77, 82, 83, 84, 85, 92, 102, 105  
 Civil Rights of Jews, 13, 14, 15, 16, 63, 67, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 79, 81, 86, 92, 123, 131, 135, 164, 165, 168, 169, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 179, 180, 181, 185, 217  
 Cohen, Herman, 60  
 Coleridge and the Jews, 163  
 Colon, Joseph, 66  
 Colonies, Jews in North America, 130, 131  
 Commerce, Jews in, 143, 146, 147, 192, 193  
 Congress of Vienna, 169, 170  
 Contents, III, IV  
 Conversion, in the Christian Era, 62, 65, 68, 79, 82, 83, 87  
 Conversion, under the Romans, 14, 15, 16, 18  
 Crafts, Jews in, 96, 97  
 Cremieux, Adolphe, 184  
 Crescas, Hasdai, 115  
 Crusades, 103, 104, 107, 109  
 Culture, Secular, 147, 148  
 Damascus Affair, 184  
 Dialectics, 39, 154  
 Diaspora, Conditions in, 7  
 Diaspora, Jewish Propaganda, 8, 14, 15  
 Diaspora, Judaizing Tendencies, 7, 8  
 Diaspora, Proselytism, 8, 9  
 Diaspora, Struggle with Christianity, 9  
 Disputations, 64, 77  
*Doctrines and Views (Emunoth Ve-Deoth)*, 55  
 Dohm, *Concerning the Civic Improvement of the Jews*, 164, 165, 168  
 Domus Conversorum (House of Converts), 79  
 Dreyfus Case, 215  
 Eastern Europe, Jews in, 76  
*Edict Concerning the Civil Status of the Jews*, 168  
 Edict of Tolerance, 164  
 Education, 112, 191, 203, 217

Einhorn, David, 168  
Elisha ben Abuyah, 12  
England, Jews in, 79, 92, 97, 104, 127, 180, 181  
Exilarch (Resh Galutha), 21, 24, 26, 49  
Expulsions, 76, 77, 78, 80, 85, 87, 89, 101, 109, 129, 134, 144, 215, 216

Financial Aid to the State, 141  
Fiscus Judaicus, 4, 17  
Folk Lore, 111  
*Fountain of Life*, 57  
France, Emancipation in, 164  
France, Jews in, 76, 77, 78, 90, 92, 93, 97, 100, 101, 103, 104, 114, 164, 165, 215  
Francis Joseph of Austria and the Jews, 176  
Frankel, Zacharias, 201  
Friedlander, David, 195, 196

Gamaliel II, 5, 8  
Gaonim, 49, 54  
Gaul, Jews in, 69  
Geiger, Abraham, 198  
Gemara, 40  
Germany, Emancipation in, 167  
Germany, Jews in, 69, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 90, 93, 97, 98, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 114, 116, 128, 132, 133, 134, 135, 139, 140, 157, 166, 190, 191, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 201, 213, 214  
Germany, Intellectual Stagnation in, 157  
Germany, Internal Life of the Jews, 75  
Germany, Mysticism in, 116, 117  
Gershom ben Judah of Metz, 113

Ghetto, 125, 126, 142, 167, 179, 180  
Glückel of Hameln, 147  
Golden Age in Spain, 55, 56, 83  
Gnostics, Christians and, 5, 6  
Graetz, Heinrich, 201  
Great Assembly, 29  
"Great Sanhedrin", 166  
*Guide for the Perplexed (Moreh Nebukim)*, a philosophical presentation of Jewish Theology, 59

Hadrian, 10, 11, 12, 13  
Haggadah, 29, 30, 42  
Halakah, 29, 30, 42, 54, 55  
Halevi, Jehuda, 51, 58  
Haskalah Movement, 203  
Hebrew, the Rise of Modern, 204  
Hebrew Union College, 206  
Hebrew University, 225  
Hasidism, 156, 157, 202, 205  
Heine, Heinrich, 197  
Herzl, Theodore, 219, 225  
Hillel, 4, 31, 33  
Hillel II, 17  
Hirsch, Samson Raphael, 198  
Historical and Orthodox Judaism, 201  
Horowitz, Isaiah, 154  
Host, Desecration of, 106, 137  
Hungary, Conditions in, 177

Ibn Ezra, Abraham, 58  
Ibn Ezra, Moses, 58  
Ibn Gabirol, Solomon, 57  
Ibn Shaprut, Chasdai, Patron of Learning, 56  
Immanuel ben Salomon, 110  
Immigration, 218, 222, 224

Inquisition, 64, 65, 82, 84, 87, 115, 125  
 Israel of Miedzyboz, 156  
 Isserles, Moses, 152  
 Italy, Jews in, 93, 96, 113, 124, 179, 180  
 Jabneh, School at, 4  
 Jacobson, Israel, 195  
 Jerusalem, Fall of, 3  
 "Jewish Census", 213  
 Jewish Encyclopedia, 208  
 Jewish Institute of Religion, 209  
 Jewish Minority Rights, 224  
 Jewish Publication Society of America, 208  
 Jewish Theological Seminary, 207  
 Jews under Arab Influence, 53, 55  
 Jews under Arian Rule, 67  
 Johanan ben Nappaha, 38  
 Johanan ben Zakkai, 4  
 John Capistrano, 66  
 Joselman of Rosheim, Champion of the Jews, 133  
 Joseph Nasi (Duke of Naxos and Cyclades), 124  
 Judah I, ("Hanasi", the prince), 13, 22, 34, 35  
 Julian the Apostate, Relief under, 17  
 Justinian, 16  
 Kabbalah, 27, 116, 148, 149, 150, 154  
 Kallah Assemblies, 23  
 Kalonymus Family, 78  
 Karaism, 50, 51, 54  
 Kohut, Alexander, 207  
 Kimchi Family, 113, 115  
 Kuzari (*The Chazar*), 58  
 League of Nations, 222, 225  
 Lessing and the Jews, 163, 164  
 Levi b. Gershon, 111, 115  
 Levinsohn, Isaac Baer, 204  
 Levy, Asser, 130  
 "The Light of the Exile" (Gershom ben Judah of Metz), 113  
*Light of the Eyes*, 149  
 Loyalty, Decay of Jewish, 193  
 Luis de Santangel, 128  
 Luis de Torres, 129  
 Luria, Isaac, 148  
 Luria, Solomon, 151  
 Luther, 66, 121, 122  
 Macaulay, *The Civil Disabilities of the Jews*, 180  
 Maimonides, Influence on General Philosophic Thought, 60, 114, 115  
 Manasseh ben Israel, 127  
*Mappah*, 152  
 Marranos, 83, 84, 87, 124, 125, 126, 128, 129, 130, 143, 149  
 Mar Samuel, 22, 25  
 Mar Sutra II, 26  
 Martyrdom, 12, 13  
 Maskilim, 203, 204  
 Masoreh, 52  
 Massacres, 83, 85, 92, 103, 107, 108, 138  
 Meir, 34  
 Meir of Rothenburg, 114  
 Mendelssohn, Moses, 163, 190, 194, 195, 203, 226  
 Meshullam ben Jacob of Lunel ("The Prince"), 115  
 Metternich and the Jews, 176  
 Midrash, 28  
 Mikra, Divisions of, 30

Mirabeau, *Concerning Moses Mendelssohn and the Civic Improvement of the Jews*, 164, 165

Mishnah, Characteristics of, 36

Mishnah, Completion under Judah I, "Hanasi", 13, 35

Mishnah, Contents of, 35

Mishnah, Development of, 29, 30, 31

Mishnah, Interpretation of 37

Mishnah, in Translation, 56

*Mishneh Torah* or *Yad ha Hazakah* (*Mighty Hand*), as a Compendium of Judaism, 59

Mohammed and the Jews, 47, 48

Molko, Solomon, 125

Money-lenders, Jews as, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 145

Montefiore, Moses, 184

Moorish Courts as Centers of Learning, 56

Morais, Sabato, 207

*Moreh Nebukim*, 115

Moses ben Maimon (Rambam), 58, 59, 60

Napoleon and the Jews, 165

*Nathan the Wise*, 164, 190

Nationalism, 210, 215, 224

Nationalism, Jewish, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 225

Nehardea, 23

Netherlands, Jews in, 126, 127, 177, 178

Nicholas II and the Jews, 217

"Numerus Clausus", 224

Occupations of Jews, 93, 215

Palestine, after the Destruction, 4, 16

Palestine, Closing of the Academies, 17

Palestine, Patriarchate Abolished, 17

Palestinian Schools, 17, 138

Palestinian Talmud, 17

Patriarch (Nasi), 4

Persecution, 72, 76, 77, 78, 83, 85, 92, 99, 103, 107, 137, 215, 216

Persecution during the Black Death, 108

Persecution, in Poland, 137, 181

Persecution, in the Diaspora, 8, 12, 18, 25, 26

Persecution, in Spain, 55

Persecution, under Hadrian, 12

Persecution, under Heraclius, 18

Persecution, under the Persians, 25, 26

Persecution, under the Popes, 63, 65, 72

Pharisees and Sadducees, 29

Philosophy, Development under Arab Influence, 53, 54

Pinto, Isaac, 141

Piutim, 53

Poets and Poetry, Jewish, 110, 114

Pogrom, 188, 215, 216, 217, 223

Poland, Jews in, 109, 110, 135, 144, 152, 155, 181, 224

Polish Scholars and Scholarships, 153, 154, 155, 156

Portugal, Jews in, 86, 152

Poverty of Jews, 147, 183

Professions, Jews in, 143

*Protocols of the Elders of Zion, The*, 223

Provence, Learning in the, 114, 115

Prussia, Conditions in, 170

Pumbeditha, 25

Rab Ashi, 26, 39  
 Rabbanism, 50, 51  
 Rabbinical Assemblies, 200  
 Rabbinism, 200  
 Rashi (Solomon ben Isaac of Troyes), 112, 113  
 Reform Judaism in America, 205, 206, 207  
 Reform Movement, 195, 196, 198, 202, 203, 204, 205  
 Reform, the Struggle Over, 199, 201  
 Reformation and the Jews, 121, 122  
 Reformation, Hebrew Learning in the, 122  
 Restrictions against Jews, 63, 77, 93, 95, 97, 125, 126, 134, 135, 138, 142, 144, 145, 167, 170, 176, 178, 183, 188  
 Reubeni, David, 125  
 Reuchlin, 123  
 Revolt, against Hadrian, 10, 11, 12, 13  
 Revolt, against, Trajan, 9, 10  
 Revolt, under Mar Sutra II, 26  
 Riesser, Gabriel, 133, 173  
 Rumania and the Jews, 185, 215, 224  
 Russia and the Jews, 182, 183, 184, 204, 216, 217, 218, 223, 224  
 Saadya ben Joseph of Fayyum, 54  
 Saboraim, 39  
 Sacrificial Cult, 5  
 Salomon, Haym, 141  
 Samuel Hanagid, Patron of Learning, 56  
 Samuel, Herbert, 222  
 Sanhedrin, 4, 17  
 Santob de Carrion, 110  
 Scandinavia, Conditions in, 179  
 Schechter, Solomon, 207  
 Scientists, Jewish, 110, 111, 192  
 Secular Culture of Jews in Modern Times, 191, 192, 194, 195, 202  
 Sefardim, 132  
 Servants of the State, 146  
 Shabbethai Zebi, 150, 151, 155  
 Shammai, 31, 33  
*Shulhan Aruk*, 151, 152, 212  
 Sicily, Jews in, 88, 96, 101  
*Sicut Judaeis (Letters of Protection)*, 62  
 Smolenskin, Perez, 218  
 Social Position in the Middle Ages, 102  
 "Society for the Dissemination of Knowledge and Culture among the Jews," 197  
 "Society for the Spread of Culture Among the Jews," 204  
 Soferim (Scribes), 29  
 Song of Zion, Herders' Translation of, 58  
 South America, Jews in, 129  
 Spain, Jews in, 57, 58, 59, 60, 68, 69, 80, 81, 90, 93, 96, 98, 114, 144  
 Spain, Poetry and Philosophy, 57, 58, 59, 60  
 Spinoza, 60, 149  
 Stuyvesant, Peter, and the Jews, 130  
*Subtleties of Abaye and Raba*, 39  
 Suesskind of Trimberg, 110  
 Sura, 23, 54  
 Switzerland, Conditions in, 178  
 Talmud, 26, 27, 30, 37, 39, 54, 57, 59, 64, 77, 112, 113, 116, 123, 125, 149, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 157, 191, 212

Talmud Babli (*Babylonian Talmud*), 39

Talmud, Contents and Style of, 40, 41, 42, 43

*Talmud of the Land of Israel (Talmud Jerushalmi)*, 39

Talmud, Nature of, 40, 41, 42, 43

Tannaim (Teachers), 31

Taxation, 4, 17, 21, 49, 55, 83, 87, 90, 91, 92, 93, 98, 140, 141, 164, 167, 168, 169, 172, 177

Titus, Triumph of, 3

Theodosius II, 15

Tibbon Family, 115

Torah, 32, 33

Torah, Contents of, 27, 28

Torah, Significance of, 27

Tosafists, 113

Trades, in Central and Eastern Europe, 144, 192, 193

Trajan, 9, 10

Travellers and Traders, Jews as, 93, 94, 95, 143

Troki, Issac, and the Hizzuk Emunah, 137

Turkey, Jews in, 123, 124, 140, 185

Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 206, 220

Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations, 208

United States, Cultural Cooperation in the, 208

United States, Jews in, 187, 188, 189, 209, 210

United States, Relief Work in, 209

United States, Religious and Educational Progress in, 209

United States, Tolerance in, 187, 188

United Synagogue, 207

Usury, 99, 101

Visigothic Rule in Spain, 68, 69

War of Liberation, Jews in, 169

Washington, Letter to the Hebrew Congregations of Newport, 132

Wertheimer, Samson, 141

Wise, Isaac M., 206

World War, 217

Yeshibah, 208

"Yiddish" Culture, 219

Zacuto, Abraham, and Columbus, 111

Zaddik, The, 156

Zionism, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222

*Zohar*, 116, 151, 152

Zunz, Leopold, and the Science of Judaism, 197

Zunz, Leopold, 172







DS Elbogen, Ismar, 1874- 1943.

123 History of the Jews after the fall of the Jewish state,  
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